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**Illustrations of northern antiquities, from the earlier
Teutonic and Scandinavian romances**

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Sect. II. - Of the teutonic cyclus of romance

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advise her to leave her lewd life, and to abandon the tiara; which she promises. Death is sent to her, and warns her of her speedy dissolution. She cries for mercy to the Virgin, who appears to her, and promises to intercede for her soul. Then she is delivered of the child, and Mors kills her instantly after. The devil whom she had forced out of the body of the senator's son was waiting to seize the soul, which he carried to hell. There she was forced to drink the infernal potion, and threatened with the most merciless treatment. But she continued to call upon the Virgin for help and deliverance. In the meantime the most portentous signs had appeared at Rome. Blood had rained for three days, and earthquakes and famine had desolated the country. The cardinals go in procession, with torches and banners, and institute the famous chair for trying the virility of all future popes. The soul of Pope Jutta was in the meantime tormented by the devils, but the Virgin and St Nicolas intercede for her so effectually, that Christ sends St Michael to fetch it from hell, which enterprise he accomplishes with considerable difficulty. The drama ends with the soliloquy of the delivered soul. Notwithstanding the great incongruity of the plot, there is considerable merit in the execution, and some humour in the dialogues between the devils.

With the exception of some fine church hymns, by Luther and several of his cotemporaries, there occurs no one among the German metrifiers, from the time of Hans Sachs, worthy of mention, till the appearance of Opitz, Fleming, and Weckherlin, who flourished in the first half of the seventeenth century, and produced some poems of the very first rank, particularly the former, who obtained the name of father of German poesy. But their successors, till within the last fifty years, are worthy of no regard whatever.

SECT. II.—*Of the Teutonic Cyclus of Romance.*

Before we enter into a general investigation of this comprehensive class of romances, and attempt to trace their connection amongst them-

selves, and with their romantic brethren of the North, we shall prefix an enumeration of such as are in existence at present, in the different libraries, and dwell peculiarly upon those of which abstracts are presented to the reader in this volume. For this purpose we shall follow the arrangement of Hagen, in the collection of ancient German poems mentioned above, which comprehends all those that have been hitherto discovered, with the exception of the oldest fragment extant of any of them, in prose. This, on account of its extreme antiquity, will be given entire in the Appendix, with a Latin and English literal translation. It is in the dialect of Lower Germany, approaching very nearly to the Anglo-Saxon, and was printed in J. G. Eccardi *Commentar. de rebus Franciæ Orientalis*, (tom. I. p. 864,) with a Latin translation, and a very extensive body of notes, from a MS., which once belonged to the abbey of Fulda, from whence it was transferred to the library of the landgrave of Hesse-Cassel. The age of the MS., according to the learned editor, is the eighth century, and the romance, of which it is a short fragment, seems to have been produced in the times of paganism, as the principal hero, Hildebrand, invokes Irmin, the god of war amongst the Teutonic nations. The fragment consists of a dialogue between Hildebrand, (who is one of the heroes in all these romances) and his son Hatubrand, which ends in a combat between them, and seems to have been the original of the song of Hildebrand, mentioned in the ensuing list, (No. 13,) a translation of which will likewise be found in the Appendix.

1. The first among the romances of this cyclus, not in point of the time of its production, but in priority of the events recorded in it, consists of the adventures of Otnit, and of Hugh-and-Wolfdietrich, and forms the first and second part of the great Book of Heroes, or Legend of Champions; an abstract of which is given in this volume. Besides this romance, it contains two other portions, enumerated in this list, (No. 7, 8.) There are several manuscripts of this extensive work in the Vatican at Rome, at Strasburg, Vienna, Frankfort, &c. It was first printed in the fifteenth century, without date, and reprinted, with little variation, in the years 1491, 1509, 1545, 1560, and

1590; all of these editions having wooden cuts tolerably executed: From a transcript of the last, the present abstract has been taken. The author of the two first divisions (and probably also of the third) of this work is the knight Wolfram of Eschenbach, born in Bavaria, who flourished about 1207, and was patronised chiefly by the landgrave of Thuringia. He was a most prolific poet. Besides the present work, he is asserted to be author of *Titirel*, or the *Guardians of the Holy Graal*, of *Percival*, *William of Oranse*, *Lohengrin*, *Duke Frederick of Swabia*, the *History of the Emperors*, and *Godfrey of Bouillon*, all of them poems of great length.

2. *Etzel's Hofhaltung*, or *The Court of Etzel*, (*Attila*;) exists at Dresden, in MS.

3. *Dietrich and Sighenot*; was printed in the years 1490, 1577, 1613, and 1677.

4. *Ecken Ausfahrt*, the *Expedition of the Ecken*; printed in 1491, 1512, and 1577.

5. *The Earlier Combats of Dietrich and his Champions*, in MS., at the Vatican.

6. *Romance of the youthful Adventures of the Horny Siegfried*; printed at Nuringberg, without date. It relates the same adventures of this hero which are the subject of a popular book still very current in Germany. The hero leaving his father, wanders about for many days, till, driven by hunger, he is forced to work for a smith; but his strength is so prodigious, that he splits the anvil with the first stroke. The smith gives him some blows, and he in return throws him to the ground. In order to be revenged upon the young apprentice, the smith sends him, under pretence of fetching charcoal, to a forest, inhabited by his brother, who had been transformed into the shape of a dragon. But Siegfried tore out several trees, threw them on the monster, and then set fire to the pile. The fat of the dragon run upon the ground like a rivulet, and Siegfried accidentally dipping his finger in, and finding it become of a horny consistence, bathed his whole body in the fat, and thus rendered it invulnerable, with the exception of a place on his back, where a leaf happening to stick, prevented the

fat from having its due effect. (See the Nibelungen.) Afterwards he releases the daughter of King Gilibaldus, who dwelt upon the Rhine, from a dragon who had ravished her from her father's court; and achieves many other adventures with wild beasts, giants, and dwarfs. He is married to the princess, and killed by the envy of her three brothers, in the same manner as in the Nibelungen.

7. The Great Garden of Roses at Worms, which forms the third division of the Book of Heroes. Another poem on the same subject, but differing widely from the printed copy, is at Strasburg, and in the Vatican.

8. The little Garden of Roses, or Laurin, King of the Dwarfs, being the fourth and last part of the Book of Heroes. It was the production of Henry of Ofterdingen, a cotemporary of Eschenbach's, and a citizen of Eisenach. A copy, greatly enlarged, has been printed from a Copenhagen MS., by Nyerup, (*Symbolæ ad Lit. Teut. Antiq. Havniciæ*, 1787, p. 1—82.)

9. The Duke of Aquitania exists in MS. at Vienna, and is probably either the original, or a translation of a very curious Latin poem, which appears to have been written by a monk. It was printed by Professor Fischer in 1780, under this title,—*De prima expeditione Attilæ, regis Hunnorum, in Gallias, ac de rebus gestis Waltharii Aquitanorum principis, Carmen epicum seculæ VI.*, from a manuscript of the thirteenth century. Another edition was given by Molter, in 1798. The poem opens with the praise of Attila and his expedition from Pannonia. Gibicho, king of the Franks, sends the youth Hagano, a descendant of the Trojans, with rich treasures, to deprecate his wrath. Herrik, king of Burgundy, whose residence is at Cauillon, beyond the Aar and Rhone, gives his daughter Hiltegund as hostage to Attila, and Alphere, king of Aquitania, sends his son Walther for the same purpose. Hiltegund, Hagano, and Walther are educated at the Hunnish court, and to the former the royal jewels are given in charge. Meantime King Gibicho dies, and his son Gunthar refuses to do homage to the Huns, which Hagano hearing, he flies from Attila. Walther persuaded the princess Hiltegund to accompany him in his

flight. She filled two chests with golden rings from the treasury; and they took occasion to effect their purpose during a feast. Walther rode on his horse Leo, armed after the manner of the Huns, with a two-edged sword on his left, and a one-edged one on his right side. The princess rode on another horse with the treasure. They only travelled during the night, and arrived in a fortnight at Vuormatia, (Worms,) the residence of the Frankish king. Walther gave some fishes which he had caught by the way to the ferryman who had ferried them over the Rhine, which the latter brought to the royal table. Gunthar knowing them not to be the produce of the Rhine, and inquiring how he obtained them, heard of the arrival of the knight and the princess, and of the two chests, which, from the sound they emitted, appeared to contain gold. Hagano, by the description, recognised his fellow Walther; but King Gunthar resolved to seize on the treasures, and indemnify himself for those his father had sent to Attila. He accordingly assembled his champions, and pursued Walther, whom he overtook in the forest of Vasgovia. In a place where two rocky mountains formed a narrow cave, the Aquitanian prince was attacked, after he had refused to give up the treasure; notwithstanding Hagano had used every exertion to prevent the combat, the evil consequence of which to the king he had beheld in a dream. For this counsel he was upbraided as a coward by the king, and sullenly retired to a neighbouring hill, where he beheld the fight. Of the other eleven champions who had accompanied Gunthar, eight defied Walther, one after another, and were all felled to the ground by him. The remaining three use a very curious weapon, which is described in several chronicles of the Franks, against him. They throw a trident with strings at his feet, and endeavour to cast him to the ground, and then to murder him. But he stands firm, and kills them all. Gunthar flies to Hagano, who is reconciled to him, and advises him to get Walther into a snare, by a feigned retreat. Walther not suspecting the stratagem, remains in a cave, and in the morning, when he issued to proceed on his journey, is attacked by the king and Hagano. The former soon falls before the Aquitanian, and fractures his thigh-bone; and the latter, after having struck off his

opponent's right hand, had his head opened, and his right eye thrust out, by the poniard of Walther. Then the three heroes reconcile themselves, drink together on the field of battle, and joke upon the loss of their limbs. The Franks return to Worms, and Walther to Aquitania, where he reigned in peace for thirty years.—The subject of this poem is alluded to, towards the conclusion of the Song of the Nibelungen; and a very similar story occurs in the 86th and the following chapters of the *Wilkina-Saga*, an account of which will be given in p. 28, &c. There the hero is called Walther of Waskastein, which name he also bears in the third part of the *Book of Heroes*. Fischer judges the poem to have been written in the sixth century. It was probably produced in the time of King Pepin. The MS. at Carlsruhe appears to be of the ninth century; and in the chronicle of the abbey of Novalesse, founded in the eighth century, at the foot of Mont Cenis, printed by Muratori, and by him judged to have been compiled about 1060, an account is given of Walther, son of Alfer, king of Aquitania, who was a monk in that monastery, and underwent similar adventures. A quotation is given in the chronicle from the Latin poem. The principal heroes of it also occur in the *Nibelungen* and the *Book of Heroes*, but there, instead of Franks, they are Burgundians.

10 and 11. The Flight of Dietrich to the Huns, and his vain endeavour to recover his realm. Both in a MS. of the Vatican, transcribed in 1477.

12. The Song of the Nibelungen, and the Lament. Of this most ancient among the Teutonic metrical romances, there are three MSS. at St Gallen, Hohenems, and Munich. The latter half, with the Lament, was printed separately by Bodmer; and the whole in Miller's collection, mentioned above. A new edition, in which the orthography and the principal antiquated words have been modernised, but the versification and the antique cast of the language retained, was published in 1807, by Hagen.* From a comparison of

* We have to regret that the copy which has reached us wants the introduction, which would have given us great light upon the history of the poem, and its connection with Scandinavian romances, as the learning of M. v. d. Hagen insures the great research of his investigations.

the latter with the old copy in Miller, the abstract in this volume has been made. It is not easy to determine in what age the poem was written, and the author is unknown. At the end of the Lament, which is in a different measure, and was probably written by a different person, and in a subsequent period, the author of that poem names himself Conrad; from which evidence Miller very absurdly concluded the whole to be the work of Conrad of Wuerzburg, who did not flourish till the years 1280 and 1300. I have no doubt whatever that the romance itself is of very high antiquity, at least of the eleventh century, though certainly the present copy has been considerably modernized. It will be seen immediately that it is quoted in the Wilkina-Saga, as being very ancient at the time that work was compiled, which was about the year 1250.

13. The Song of Master Hildebrand. The oldest copy is at Dresden, in MS. From an ancient edition, in which it has been considerably shortened; it was reprinted by Eschenburg, and a translation of the latter will be found in the Appendix, No. II. The chief value of the ballad, besides that of the poetry, is its coinciding so nearly with the ancient prose-fragment already mentioned.

14. King Rother; a very ancient poem, which has lately been published from the only manuscript of it which is known, in the Heidelberg library, at the Vatican. It forms, as it were, an intermediate chain between the German cyclis of romance and that of Charlemagne. The hero is the grandfather of that emperor, and the father of Pepin. Almost the same story, but attributed to a different set of actors, occurs in the Wilkina-Saga, (p. 113—132.) The German editor supposes, with great probability, that it was produced in the first half of the twelfth century. The antiquity of the language, and the rudeness of the versification and of the rhymes, which are very similar to those used in the poem of St Anno, mentioned above, vouch for the truth of his supposition. The fable of the poem is so singular, that an abstract of it deserves to be given to the English public.

* In the Danish Kæmpe Viser there is a literal translation of the ballad.

It will now be necessary to give some account of the Scandinavian romances and poems, in which the same heroes, and very similar actions occur. The oldest mention of this cyclus, in that language, is in the Flateyan Codex, at Copenhagen, written in the fourteenth century. There it is related by the historian Gunlog, how, at the court of King Olaf Tryggvin, who first introduced the Christian religion in Norway, about the year 1000, the poems of the Edda, the second ode of Sigurd, who had killed the smith, that of Brynhildar's ride to hell, (translated partly by the Hon. W. Herbert,*) that of Gudrunar Ruida, and, finally, the song of Gunnar, were sung to the harp. Of these four poems, only the three first are preserved in the Edda of Sæmund. In these pieces, which have not as yet been published, as well as in the Wolsunga-and Norna-Gest's Sagas, printed in the valuable collection entitled, *Nordiska Kæmpe Datter* by Biærner, Brynhildr is a mythological personage, one of the Valkyriæ, not a mere mortal virgin, as in the Teutonic romances. She is the daughter of Budla, king of the Saxons and Franks, and lived in a lonely castle, encircled by the fire Vafloga. The Sigurd of the Edda, according to Warnefrid, was the son of Sigmund, king of Hunnenland and of Hiordisa, and had two wives, Brynhildr, and Gudruna Grimhild, daughter of Giuko, (the Gibich of the German Book of Heroes,) king of Nifungaland. His daughter Aslœg was the wife of the celebrated Regner Lodbrog. According to this account, Sigurd must have lived in the eighth century; but the *Hyndlu Lioth*, in the Edda,² makes him a cotemporary of Jormunrek, (the Ermanrek of the *Wilkina-Saga*,) and therefore also of Dietrich of Bern, which is more consonant to the Teutonic romances. For an abstract of the *Wolsunga-Saga*, which may be considered as a digest of the Scandinavian traditions, respecting these celebrated heroes, the reader is referred to the elegant work of Mr Herbert.⁴ The discussion of the question respecting the relative

* *Miscellaneous Poetry*, Vol. II. Part II. p. 14.

² *Edda rhythmica seu antiquior, vulgo Sæmundina dicta*, Pars. I. Hafniæ, 1787, 4to, Præf. p. xxxviii.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

⁴ *Misc. Poet. ut supra*, pp. 20—33.

antiquity of these and of the Teutonic traditions is reserved till the end of the following enumeration of the other remains in the northern languages.

Saxo Grammaticus, who wrote about the year 1200, relates, that Magnus, the younger son of the Danish king Nicolas, conspired against the life of his elder brother Canute, to prevent his succeeding to the throne of his father, and sent a Saxon minstrel, one of the conspirators, to invite Canute to a conference, at which he was to be slain. But the minstrel had compassion on Canute, and having sworn not to betray the secret, he chaunted, in order to give him an indirect warning, the well-known treachery of Grimhild towards her brothers, formed into a well-ordered poem. This poem is probably still extant; for in the valuable collection of Danish ballads entitled *Kæmpe Viser*, there are three which relate the revenge of Grimhild, or Chrimhild, very little differing, as to the facts, from the Teutonic romances. But the scene, which in these, as well as the older Scandinavian romances, is laid upon the Rhine, is here transferred to the island of Hvena,¹ situated between Zealand and Scania, and celebrated in latter times by the residence of Tycho de Brahe. One of these very curious and ancient ballads will be found in a subsequent part of this volume, translated by Mr Jamieson, together with some others relative to these heroes, whose popularity was nearly as extensive as that of Charlemagne and Arthur.

The most comprehensive of the romances in the Scandinavian tongue is the *Wilkina- and Niflunga-Saga*,² which is, however, to be considered entirely as a Teutonic work. It is, in fact, a digest of several metrical romances in the latter dialect of the Gothic, in the same manner as Malory's *Mort Arthur* was formed from the French romances. In several passages there is a direct reference to far more ancient Teu-

¹ Perhaps the reason of this variation may be accounted for, by the corruption of Heu-naland, the land of the Huns, which is so called in the Teutonic romances, as well as in some of the Scandinavian, into the island of Hvena.

² *Wilkina Saga, eller Historien om Kong Thiderich af Bern och hans Kæmpar; samt Niflunga Saga, &c.* Published by Peringskiöld. Stockholm, 1715, fol., with a Latin and Swedish translation.

tonic songs and poems, from which it was compiled. Thus in the 328th chapter, where Queen Ostacia sends an army of wild beasts, such as lions, bears, and dragons, German songs and poems are quoted as authority.¹ Again, in the Niflunga-Saga, chapter 363² and 367,³ similar references occur. And in the Blomsturvalla-Saga it is said that "the History of King Thidrik was first written in Germany, and afterwards brought to Norway by Master Bicern i Nidaros, who was bishop of Norway." He was sent by King Hackan Hackanson, about 1250, to the court of Frederick II., emperor of Germany, whose brother was to espouse Christina, the daughter of King Hackan. At the German court he heard the history read, and brought it with him to Norway, where it was translated into Scandinavian. Several manuscripts were preserved. One of them seems to be nearly of the age in which the bishop lived. The following is a bare outline of this extraordinary romance, a more dilated abstract of which should certainly be given to the public. In order to exhibit the connection of the Teutonic romances, it was, however, deemed eligible to exhibit some general account of it in this place. The preface to the Book of Heroes relates several parts of the Saga which are not at present known to be extant in German, shortly, but with considerable variations.

The romance begins with the history of the doughty knight Sam-

¹ Sva seigir i kvædum Thyderskum, at hennar hæf væri likur fiœdum sialfom, oc hon sialf var oc sem einn flugdreki. i. e. The German songs say that her armies were like the devils themselves, and she herself was in the shape of a fire-drake.

² Sva er sagt i Thydeskum kvædum, &c. German poems speak of the bloody fight between Thidrik and the Niflungen, and how the sword Eckisax resounded on the helmets.

³ Hier ma nu hæyra frasogn Thydeskra manna, &c. Worthy of notice are those German songs of the inhabitants of Susa, [so the residence of Attila is called in this romance,] where these memorable actions happened. They can tell where Hogen fell, where Irung was slain, and where the dungeon was where King Gunnar was killed: They show the garden, which is still called the Niflung-Garden, where the heroes were slain, &c. And men of Munster and Bremen, worthy of belief, relate the same facts, without knowing any thing of the others, almost without variation; from which may be deduced the fidelity of the histories sung in poems in the Teutonic tongue, to the commemoration of the deeds of illustrious men. (Oc er that mest eptir thivi sem seigia forkvædi i Thyderskri tunga, er giort hafa storir menn umm thau stortidendi er i thessu landi hafa ordit.)

son, born in the city of Salerno, who became enamoured of Hildevida, daughter of Rodger Jarl, lord of that city, with whom he escaped from her father's court, and killed him and King Brunstein, his brother. Then he became king of the Goths, and begot three sons; Ermenrek, king of the Goths in Puli, (Apulia,) Thietmar, king of Bern, (Verona,) and a natural son, named Aka Orlungatrost. After the death of Samson, Thietmar married Odilia, the daughter of Elsung Jarl, and begot the celebrated Thidrek, (Dietrich, Theoderic,) of Bern, king of Aumlungaland, (Italy,) who is the central hero of this whole connection of histories, which relates successively the deeds of the champions who attached themselves to him, and the manner in which they joined his fellowship. The first of these was Hildebrand, son of Reginbald, duke of Venice, who came to the court of Thietmar at the age of five; Thidrek being at the time seven years old. A strict intimacy between the boys took place, and when they grew up to manhood they achieved several adventures, the most remarkable of which was their making the dwarf Alpris' captive, and their obtaining, by his assistance, the valuable sword Nagelring. The next hero who joins the fraternity, after being subdued in battle by Thidrek, was Heimer, the son of Studo, who dwelt beyond the Alps, near Segard, the castle of the Lady Brynhild, famed for her matchless beauty.

The history of the third champion, Vidga, (the Wittich of the Book of Heroes,) is next related. His remote ancestor was Wilkinus, king of Wilkinaland, (Sweden,) who, by a sea-monster, begot the giant Wada, who lived in Sealand, and had a son called Velint, one of the most excellent smiths who ever lived. His father hearing of the great skill of the smith Mimer, in Hunaland, sent him thither in his ninth year, where he learnt the trade at the same time with the celebrated Sigurd, (Siegfried.) Afterwards he prosecuted his study with the dwarfs in a mountain, and there reached the summit of his art. His father was killed by the fall of a rock, occasioned by an earthquake, which his tremendous snoring produced.² Velint proceed-

¹ A very similar adventure occurs in the first part of the Book of Heroes, which see.

² This ludicrous adventure is very like one of the god Thor, in the twenty-third chapter of the prose Edda, translated by Goranson.

ed to the court of Nidung, king of Waringia, living in Jutland, at whose court he was challenged by the smith Amilias to a trial of skill. The latter fabricated a suit of armour. Velint forged the sword Mimung in seven days, with which he cut a thread of wool, floating on the water, asunder, in the presence of the king. But finding the falchion heavy and unweildy, he sawed it in pieces, and, in a mixture of milk and meal, forged it in a red-hot fire for three days, and at the end of thirteen produced another sword, which cut through a whole ball of wool floating on the water. Still he was not satisfied with its goodness, but committed it again to the flames, and after seven weeks, having separated every particle of dross from the metal, fabricated a falchion of such exquisite goodness, that it split a whole bundle of wool, floating on the water, in two. The smith Amilias trusting to the impenetrability of his breastplate and helmet, sat down upon a bench, and bade his rival strike at him with the sword. But Velint split him to the navel; and when he complained that he felt as if cold iron had passed through his entrails, Velint bade him shake himself a little, upon which his body fell to the ground in two pieces.* Velint afterwards assisted King Nidung in his wars, and obtained his daughter in marriage; but, by the order of the king, he was mutilated. After several other adventures, which would occupy too much room in this introduction, to particularize them separately, Velint begot a son, named Vidga, who, going to seek adventures when he had attained to manhood, fought with several of Thidrek's knights, and at last succeeded in vanquishing that hero himself, upon which he joined his company of champions. After the wounds had been cured which Thidrek had received from the sword Mimung, he undertook a peregrination in search of adventures, anxious to recover his fame, which had been tarnished in the late engagement. In this expedition he killed Ecka, and obtained from him the celebrated sword Eckisax; disarmed Fasold, and rescued Sintram from the jaws of a dragon; both of whom become his sworn companions.

* This singular story was adopted into the Edda by Semund, under the title of *Vechundarquida*.

After this an episode is introduced respecting the wars of Wilimer, and of his four giants, Aspilian, Aventrod, Etgeir, and Widolf, (the latter of whom is so strong, that in time of peace he is led by a chain,) against the Russians; and, after that, the battles of Osantrix, king of Wilkina-land, and his obtaining Oda, the daughter of Melias, king of Hunaland, for his spouse.* After the death of King Melias, Attila, the younger son of Osid, king of Frisia, made himself master of his dominions, while his brother obtained those of their father. Attila sent Rodolf, † margrave of Bechelar, to Osantrix, demanding his daughter Erka in marriage. But his request being refused, he invaded the territory of Osantrix. Rodolf, however, went in disguise to Wilkinaburg, the residence of the latter, and persuaded the virgin to clope with him. She was brought to Attila, who made her his queen. After this follows the history of Walter of Waskastein, and his elopement with Hildegund, very nearly coinciding with the fable of the Latin epic, an abstract of which has already been given. In the meantime an altercation had happened between Heimer and Vidga. The former joined a robber named Ingram, who molested the forest of Falster, (a Danish isle near Zealand, here described as a forest lying between Saxony and Denmark.)

The sixth hero who joined the society of Thidrek was Thetlef, the son of Bitterulf, who dwelt in Denmark and Sconia. ‡ After the father and son had driven Heimer and his associates from their haunts, the latter was knighted, and proceeded in search of adventures. He fought duels with Sigurd the Grecian, and with Walter of Waskastein, and then joined the knights of Thidrek. Soon after, the old king Thietmar died, and left the inheritance of his dominions to Thidrek. Wildifer and Herbrand, two illustrious heroes, join the chivalrous association. The wars of Osantrix and Attila had continued with

* This is the part of the fable which has nearly the same subject with King Rother. See above, p. 26.

† The Rudiger of the Nibelungen.

‡ Dietlieb and his father Bitterolf are mentioned, in the third and fourth parts of the Book of Heroes, as dwelling in Styria.

varied success, but the latter, craving and obtaining the assistance of Thidrek, vanquished his opponent in a bloody battle. Vidga, however, fell into the power of the Swedes; but his friend Wildifer released him out of captivity by a stratagem.

Now the celebrated Sigurd (Siegfried) is introduced into the circle of heroes who assemble round Thidrek of Bern. His father, Sigmund, king of Jarlungaland, obtained the hand of Sisile, daughter of the Spanish king Nidung. Being forced to leave her during an expedition which he undertook for the relief of Drasolf, king of the Poles, he gave her in charge to his two counsellors, Hartvin and Herman. They prove unfaithful in their charge, and not being able to obtain their desires, accuse the queen of adultery, on the return of Sigmund, who orders her to be executed. She is led away by the two counts, but they cannot agree in what manner to deprive her of life: A battle is the consequence, in which Hartvin is killed. The queen had meanwhile been delivered of a boy, whom she had laid into a drinking-cup of glass. Hartvin, when he fell dead on the ground, accidentally threw the cup into the river, which when the queen beheld, she instantly died of grief.* Herman returning to the court, related the manner of her death, and that of his fellow, which exciting the suspicion of Sigmund, he ordered him immediately to quit his sight. The child was found floating on the river by the celebrated smith Mimer, by him rescued, and educated in his smithy. But the boy acquired prodigious strength, and continually quarrelled with the others who worked there, so that Mimer began to fear him, and in order to be rid of so troublesome a workman, sent him into a forest haunted by his brother Regin, who, for his malice, had been metamorphosed into a dragon. Sigurd, however, killed the monster, and boiled a piece of his body for his food. He put his finger into the broth, and bringing it, in order to cool it, to his tongue, a few drops fell upon it.

* This part of the story is very similar to the beautiful legend of St. Genevieve. The reader may compare the history of Sigurd, as here related, with that contained in the German popular book, a short abstract of which is given above, and with that given in the Wolsunga-Saga and the Edda.

He instantly understood the language of the birds,¹ who were just conversing about the danger in which he stood from the anger of Mimer, the brother of the dragon. Sigurd, warned by their conversation, returned to the smith, and killed him. Then he proceeded to the castle of Brynhild, threw down the seven gates, and took away the wild horse Grana, which was grazing in a meadow. Then he entered into the service of Isung, king of Bertangaland.²

About the same time flourished the three sons of Aldrian, king of Niflungaland,³ and of Oda, his queen, Gunnar, Gernoz, and Gissler. Hogen was also the son of Queen Oda, but was the produce of a connection she had had with an elf, (Alfur.) He was a hero of a fierce and angry disposition, just as he is described in the Nibelungen. These four heroes proceeded to Bern, where Gunnar and Hogen joined the fellowship of Thidrek. The latter celebrated a feast, at which he, with Gunnar, Hogen, Hildebrand, and Hornbog Jarl, sat upon the right side of the table, and Widga the strong, Aumlung, the son of Hornbog, Thetlef, Fasold, Sintram, Wildifer, Herbrand, denominated the wise, on account of his distant peregrinations, and Heimer the fierce, who was the Ganelon of the society, sat upon the left. During the feast, Thidrek and his twelve champions conversing of deeds of arms, Herbrand related to them how King Isung of Bertangaland had eleven sons, and that the matchless Sigurd was also at his court; that their swords and steeds were superior to those of the champions of Bern, and that they were more bold and heroic than themselves. A trial of their comparative skill was immediately concluded on. The knights proceed on the expedition, during which Vidga slays the giant Etgeir,⁴ on the frontiers. When they arrived they defied Isung,

¹ From this circumstance it would seem as if this part of the romance was oriental. Gerbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester II., who died in 1003, is said, by William of Malmesbury, among other magic arts, to have learned the language of birds from the Moors at Seville.

² Peringskiold translates this, Britannia.

³ The country about Worms, called in the German romances Burgundy.

⁴ See the Danish ballad of the Ettin Langshanks, in this volume.

his sons, and Sigurd, to do battle with them.* Hildebrand, Heimer, Hogen, Sintram, and Gunnar are vanquished and bound, but Vidga and Thetlef are more fortunate against their opponents, and release their captive companions. The final and most obstinate combat takes place between Thidrek and Sigurd, which is thrice renewed, but at length the former remains victor, having borrowed Mimung, the sword of Vidga. Aumlung espouses Fallborg, the daughter of King Isung, and Sigurd joins the twelve knights of Bern. Upon their return, Hornbog, with his son Aumlung, Sintram, and Herbrand, return home to their dominions.

After this, the nuptials between Sigurd and Grimhild, the sister of Gunnar, and of that king with Brynhild, are related shortly, and nearly in the same manner as in the Nibelungen, excepting the expedition to Isenland, and the trial of skill between Brunhild and Siegfried. Sigurd, however, actually takes advantage of lying by the side of Brynhild, and subduing her, as proxy for Gunnar. After these marriages several episodes are introduced, which have but little connection with the main action. The first relates the death of Herthegn, by the hand of his brother Sintram, and the elopement of their third brother, Herburt, with Hilder, the daughter of Artus, king of Bertangaland; which forms a singular connection between the Teutonic cyclus of romance, and that of which King Arthur is the central hero. Then the marriage of Thidrek himself, with the daughter of King Drusian, follows. Her two younger sisters are espoused by Thetlef and Fasold, two of his champions. After this triple espousal, the constructor of this chain of fictions returns somewhat confusedly to King Artus, who, at his death, left his empire, to his two sons, Iron and Apollonius; but they were expelled by Isung and his eleven sons, who have been already mentioned. They fled to Attila, by whom they were well received. Apollonius was created earl of Thuringia, and Iron earl of Brandenburgh. Solomon was at that time king of the Franks, and the young earl of Thuringia fell in love with his daughter, with whom he eloped,

* This portion of the work is very similar to the third part of the Book of Heroes.

assisted by his brother Iron, and his wife. The latter soon after died. After this, the two earls and the king made continual chaces and depredations in each others' forests. At length Apollonius died, and Iron was made prisoner by Solomon, but reconciled to him by his wife, who shortly after died. Then he had an amour with Bolfriana, in Fritilaborg, wife of the duke Ake Orlungatrost, by whom he was killed. Ake was half-brother to Ermenrek, and dying soon after, the strong knight Vidga married his widow, and thus became vassal to that king who bore the crown at Rome, his dominions extending far on both sides of the Alps.

Ermenrek had one day dispatched his counsellor Sifka to a distant castle, and took the opportunity of his absence to ravish Odilia, his wife. When Sifka returned, and heard of the crime perpetrated by the king, he resolved to obtain revenge in the most studied and malicious way. By false insinuations he persuaded the king to cause his own three sons, and then the two of Ake Orlungatrost, who had been left to the care of Vidga, to be murdered during the absence of the latter.* Sifka then advised Ermenrek to demand tribute of King Thidrek, and when it was denied, to invade his territories. The latter, not able to withstand him, was forced to fly, and abandon Bern, and to seek shelter with Attila. For thirty years he fought the battles of that king with him, against Osatrix, king of Wilkinaland, who was slain, and Waldemar, king of Russia. Queen Erka at last persuaded Attila to assist Thidrek in an attempt to recover his kingdom, which, however, proved fruitless. Thidrek was defeated, his youngest brother Thetter, and Erp and Ortwin, the two sons of Attila, were killed by Vidga, who, flying from Thidrek, was drowned in a river. Queen Erka died soon after of grief.

Here the Niflunga-Saga begins with the altercation of the two queens, Brynhild and Grimild, and the fable proceeds nearly in the same manner as that of the Nibelungen, and with very few variations, excepting Hogen's living some days in the dungeon, and be-

* The beautiful popular story of Eckard the True bears great resemblance to this tale.

getting a son, Aldrian,¹ who revenges the death of his father upon Attila, by enticing him into the treasury of the Niblungen, and shutting him up in it. Grimild, according to this narration, was killed by the hand of Thidrek.

A short episode is introduced in the Niflunga-Saga, which relates the warfare between King Isung of Bertangaland, and Hertnid, son of Osatrix and king of Wilkinaland, in which the former, and his eleven sons, were killed by the enchantment of Ostacia, the wife of Hertnid, who conjured up an army of fiends and war-wolfs, commanding them herself, in the shape of a dragon. Fasold the Proud, and Thetlef the Dane, who served in the army of Isung, were also slain. The magic queen, after her return from the battle, sickened, and died.

After the heroes had fallen at Susa, the residence of Attila, to gratify the revenge of Grimild, and no one of Thidrek's companions being left alive but Hildebrand, he resolved to return to Bern, accompanied by the latter, whose son, Alebrand, had that castle in his possession. On their road thither they heard of the death of King Ermenrek. When Hildebrand came to Bern, he met with his son, with whom he fought a severe battle, before they recognised each other.² Alebrand gave up the castle to Thidrek, killed Sifka in a battle, in which the latter endeavoured to drive Thidrek from his possessions, and became his faithful servant till his death. Thidrek was crowned emperor at Rome, and, together with Hildebrand, embraced the Christian faith. The latter soon afterwards died, at the age of 180, or, according to others, 200 years. Thidrek having lost his wife Herraud, a relation of Attila's, reigned many years, amusing himself chiefly with the chase.³

¹ See the Danish ballad of Grimild's Wrack, in this volume.

² This chapter, the 376th, bears great similarity to the Song of Hildebrand, and the ancient Teutonic fragment in the Appendix.

³ A singular passage occurs in the Annals of Snorro, where he relates the history of Widfor, or Magus Jarl. Charlemagne having heard much of those ancient heroes, Dietrich of Bern, Vidgo, the son of Velint, Gunnar the Niflung, Isung, and the northern hero Haldan, wished to see them. A magician immediately, by a spell, brought them all before the emperor, armed, sitting on their war-horses, and marching in three rows. Among the

The comparison of this extensive chain of fiction, certainly grounded upon historic truth, with the ensuing abstracts of the principal German romances, and with the real Scandinavian remains mentioned above, will lead to curious investigations, but a positive and undeniable result can hardly be expected at present. The subject is comparatively so new, and the means of complete investigation so difficult of access, that we must content ourselves chiefly with hypothetical conclusions. The most rational way of accounting for the wide diffusion of these romantic tales, is, perhaps, to consider them as a congeries of Gothic fictions of various times, (some of them possibly imported from Asia, at the time of the emigration of the Goths from thence,) engrafted upon real history; and as a confusion of fictions and actual facts, produced by continual addition to the real original foundation. We have seen that there is unquestionable authority to prove the existence of some parts, at least, of this cyclus of romance in the eighth and ninth century; and there is reason to believe that they were popular a considerable time, perhaps two centuries, before. The singular question, whether they owed their origin to the Teutonic Goths, or to their northern brethren, we have some data to determine. The residence of the principal heroes is placed, even in the older Scandinavian romances on the subject, in Germany; and that of Lady Grimild was not transferred to the Danish islands till the time when the popular ballads of Denmark were produced. It is true that the mythological cast which the fictions acquired in Scandinavia, and the magic name of the Edda, may startle our belief in their Teutonic origin; but there are such stubborn facts against deducing them from Scandinavia, that the claims of the former certainly carry more weight. It is well known that the most ancient Edda (if we except the Voluspa and a few fragments) was compiled by Sæmund, who was born about 1054, and studied for several years in Germany, at Erlangen and Cologne.

twelve spectres, Dietrich, who was the third, and appeared more powerful and gigantic than the rest, leaped from his horse. His example was followed by the others, and they all seated themselves around the throne of Charlemagne.

It requires no great stretch of hypothesis to suppose that he might have adopted some of the Teutonic traditions into his mythological collection, particularly as in those portions which refer to Brynhild, Gunnar, Grimhild, and Sigurd, the scene is placed on the Rhine, and in Saxony. But even without having recourse to this supposition, the antiquity of the fragment so often referred to, and of the Latin epic analysed above, is evidently greatly superior to any thing which the Scandinavians can show upon positive proof. To this may be added, that the most extensive Saga on these subjects, in their language, is professedly a compilation from ancient Teutonic metrical romances and songs.

Of the historical origin of the great epic Song of the Nibelungen, (for the Book of Heroes, though placed before that poem, on account of its relating the actions of older heroes, was evidently compiled in much later times, and is far more fabulous,) a few data and coincidences are all that can be expected. Attila (there named Etzel) needs no explanation; and it is well known that he had Thuringia, Poland, and Wallachia under his dominion, as related in the poem. His wife Halche, the Herka of the Wilkina-Saga, is mentioned in the fragments of the embassy of Priscus to that king, where she is named Erca. In the Hungarian chronicle of Thwartz, Dietrich, (that is, rich in people, afterwards corrupted into Theodericus, but by Procopius always spelt *Θευδερικς*;) not the celebrated Theoderic, king of the Ostrogoths, but one of his predecessors, who lived 80 years before, is represented as fighting with an army composed of Ostrogoths, Germans, and Longobards, against the Huns, at their first irruption into Europe, by whom he was defeated, and forced to join Attila with his own forces, as in the Wilkina-Saga and the Nibelungen. It is there likewise related, that Attila left his kingdom to his two sons, Chaba and Aladar, the former by a Grecian mother, the latter by Kremheilch, (Chrimhild,) a German; that Theoderic sowed dissension between them, and took, with the Teutonic nations, the party of the latter, in consequence of which a great slaughter took place, which lasted for fifteen days,

and terminated in the defeat of Chaba, and his flight to Asia.* There is, however, some confusion respecting the Theoderic (Dietrich) of these romances. Several allusions are made, which would cause us to believe Theoderic the Great was intended. In the fragment of Hildebrand, he is evidently and indubitably alluded to, as well as his enemy Odoacer. But he was not born till about the year 442, his great irruption into Italy, and his defeat of Odoacer did not take place till 480, nor his death till 526; whereas Attila was leader of the Huns already about 428, invaded Italy, and defeated the Western Goths, about 450, and died soon after. It is therefore probable, that an earlier Theoderic is the subject of these romances. Gunter, king of Burgundy, is probably Guntachar, who was actually king of the Burgundians, resided at Worms, and was slain in a battle with the Huns, about 436. Siegfried cannot so easily be traced to any historical personage. It has been conjectured, with some probability, that he was Sigbert, who is said to have been major-domo to Theoderic, and to have dwelt, with his wife Chrimhild, at Worms. His castle of Santen is undoubtedly Xanten, a town on the left side of the Lower Rhine. Tronek, the possession of Hagen, may have been (according to the supposition of Johannes Mueller, the admirable historian of Switzerland) the ancient Tournus, (Tornucium.) Isenland may either have been a super-added fiction about Iceland, or the celebrated castle of Isenburgh, on the left side of the Rhine, Charlemagne's favourite place of residence, may be intended. There is great and inexplicable confusion respecting the real meaning of the title of the poem. In some places, Nibelungenland is evidently Norway; but, in general, here, as well as in the Niflunga-Saga, it means Burgundy. The Nibelung heroes in the latter are always Burgundians, but in the poem sometimes warriors of that nation, at others, Siegfried's auxiliaries from Norway. The great Niblung treasure is represented as having come from that coun-

* For this and numerous other notices I am indebted to a learned dissertation in the *Zeitung fuer Einsiedler*, by J. Gærres.

try where Siegfried slew Prince Niblung and his brother. Bern, the residence of Dietrich, is not the city so called in Switzerland, but was the original Gothic name of Verona.

When we compare these Teutonic romances with those of France, England, and Spain, we are immediately struck with the want of chivalrous courtesy of the knights, and with the praises bestowed upon the most savage and ferocious among them. We have not here that constant obedience and attention to the ladies, who are indeed frequently more savage than their lovers. The peculiar diablerie of these romances, is, perhaps, their most striking feature. The dwarfs, who, by the French minstrels, were represented as mere naturals, and humble attendants upon the knights, are here exalted into creatures of great cunning, having dominion over the interior of the earth, consequently possessing incalculable riches in gold and gems, and having the stronger, but less sagacious, race of giants entirely under their controul. The history of the creation of those three great classes, the dwarfs, giants, and heroes, is given by the author of the preface to the Book of Heroes, in the following manner. "It should be known for what reason God created the great giants and the little dwarfs, and subsequently the heroes. First, he produced the dwarfs, because the mountains lay waste and useless, and valuable stores of silver and gold, with gems and pearls, were concealed in them. Therefore God made the dwarfs right wise and crafty, that they could distinguish good and bad, and to what use all things should be applied. They knew the use of gems—that some of them gave strength to the wearer, others made him invisible, which were called fog-caps.* Therefore God gave art and wisdom to them, that they built them hollow hills; he gave them nobility, so that they, as well as the heroes, were kings and lords; and he gave them great riches. And the reason why God created the giants, was, that they should slay the wild beasts and worms, (dragons, serpents,) and

* Nebel-kappen, tarn-kappen. In the romances themselves, they are not represented as gems, but as a kind of veils; which rendered every thing covered by them invisible.

thus enable the dwarfs to cultivate the mountains in safety. But after some time, it happened that the giants became wicked and unfaithful, and did much harm to the dwarfs. Then God created the heroes, who were of a middle rank between the dwarfs and giants. And it should be known, that the heroes were worthy and faithful for many years, and that they were created to come to the assistance of the dwarfs, against the unfaithful giants, the beasts, and the worms. The land was then waste, therefore God made strong heroes, and gave them such a nature, that their mind was ever bent on manhood, and on battles and fights. Among the dwarfs were many kings, who had giants for their servants; for they possessed rough countries, waste forests, and mountains near their dwellings. The heroes paid all observance and honour to the ladies, protected widows and orphans, did no harm to women, except when their life was in danger, were always ready to assist them, and often shewed their manhood before them, both in sport and in earnest. It should also be known, that the heroes were always emperors, kings, dukes, earls, and served under lords, as knights and squires, and that they were all noblemen, and no one was a peasant. From them are descended all lords and noblemen."

With respect to the following abstracts of the two principal Teutonic romances, and particularly the passages of which a poetical translation has been given, the reader will not here be troubled with many apologies. We were chiefly anxious to give somewhat more than a mere outline of these ancient romantic relics, which have not hitherto been known in this island, and the value of which we, perhaps, rate too highly. The poetical specimens in the *Nibelungen* are in the exact measure of the original, which closely resembles that employed by the Spaniards, in longer poems, previous to the time of Boscan. The most proper model of translating them was therefore the elegant and spirited version of some passages of the *Poema del Cid*, in the appendix to Mr Southey's *Chronicle of that hero*. The chief difference of this measure from the one employed by the German minstrel, is, the lines terminating in rhymes instead of assonance, and being regularly formed into stanzas of four lines. The original measure of the *Book of Heroes* is not

exactly the same, every stanza containing eight short lines, or rather having a rhyme, (generally feminine,) at the cæsura of each line, corresponding with the rhyme of the cæsura of the next. But as it would have been almost impossible to preserve this exactly in an English version, and as the metre is, at best, very fatiguing, by its uniformity, the same measure has been employed as in the Nibelungen. The variation is, moreover, warranted, by some ancient MS. fragments of the Book of Heroes actually employing the exact form of the stanza in the Nibelungen. In the latter, the translations are line for line, and almost literal. Those from the Book of Heroes are also very close; but it was necessary, on account of the verbosity, and the frequent repetitions, to omit several stanzas, and often to condense two into one. The Nibelungen and the first part of the Book of Heroes are divided into adventures in the original. The other parts of the latter are not; but, for the sake of uniformity, and for the ease of the reader, similar divisions have been introduced here.

exactly the same, every other containing eight lines, and so on, and
being a rhyme (generally feminine) at the end of each line, either
rhyming with the rhyme of the even or the odd. But as it would have
been almost impossible to preserve this exactly in an English version,
and as the meter is at best very fatiguing, by its monotony, the same
stanza has been employed as in the *Nibelungen*. The stanza is
monosyllabic, written, by some authors, all together, of the form
Homo actually employs the same form of the stanza in the *Nibelungen*.
In the latter, the transition was less for law, and almost his-
tory. All those from the book of *Nibelungen* are also very close, but it was
necessary, on account of the variety, and the frequent repetition,
to make several stanzas, and others to combine two into one. The
Nibelungen and the first part of the book of *Nibelungen* are divided into
stanzas in the original. The other parts of the latter are not, but
for the sake of uniformity, and for the sake of the reader, they have
been here been introduced into the same form.