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

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Adventure XX. - How king Etzel sent to Burgundy to obtain the hand of
Chrimhilt

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When the treasure arrived, Chrimhilt so prodigally distributed rich gifts, and obtained such popularity thereby, that Haghen advised Gunter to take it from her; undertaking to obtain the keys, and guard it himself. When Ghernot and Ghiseler saw his intention executed, they were highly enraged; and the former said, it would be far better to sink it to the bottom of the Rhine. Accordingly the king and his whole court for some days absented themselves from the city; during which time Haghen, who had remained behind, sunk the whole treasure into the river, and all the conspirators were sworn never to reveal the place. Chrimhilt, after enduring this additional injury, dwelt thirteen years at court, unable to forget the losses she had sustained.

ADVENTURE XX. HOW KING ETZEL SENT TO BURGUNDY TO OBTAIN THE HAND OF CHRIMHILT.—It happened that at this time Helka, the wife of Etzel, king of the Huns, died, and his counsellors advised him to send messengers to Worms, and sue for the hand of Chrimhilt. He expressed his fear that she would refuse him, he being a heathen, and she Christian. Markgrave Rudiger, of Bechelaren, however, undertook the expedition, and provided himself with apparel and arms at Vienna. He was accompanied by five hundred knights, and taking leave of his wife Gotiland, set out for Worms. He was well received upon his arrival, and Gunter, with his brothers, were well content to give their sister in marriage to King Etzel; but the fierce Haghen strongly opposed the resolution. It was at last determined that Chrimhilt should decide herself. At first she declared her firm resolution to remain a widow, and particularly never to espouse a heathen, though Rudiger told her that twelve kings and thirty princes were vassals to the king of the Huns; and Ghiseler exclaimed,

From the Rhone unto the Rhine, from the Elbe to the distant sea,
No king of greater riches and greater power may be.

Rudiger at last found the means to conquer her disinclination, by

swearing that he and his men would be ever ready to revenge her injuries, and would never refuse her any request.

Preparations were made for her departure, but she wished previously to distribute the treasure which was still in her possession. But Hagen seized upon it, and kept it back from her. Ghernot, however, took it from him by force, and returned it to her; but Rudiger bade her leave it behind, as she would stand in no need of bringing any into the realm of Hungary, where she would command riches of incalculable value. Eckewart, with five hundred men, swore to continue his fidelity to her, and follow her to Hungary. Gunter accompanied her only before the gates; but Ghernot and Ghiseler, and a thousand of their meiny, did not take leave of her till she came to the banks of the Danube.

ADVENTURE XXI. HOW CHRIMHILT CAME TO THE HUNS.—Messengers were sent to apprise King Etzel that Chrimhilt would speedily arrive. At Passau she was received by her uncle, Bishop Pilgerin, who accompanied her to Bechelaren, where splendid feasts were given to her by the margrave and his wife and daughter. She then proceeded to Medilke and Mautern, and reposed for three days at Traisemaur, a strong castle which King Etzel had built upon the river Traisem.*

ADVENTURE XXII. HOW ETZEL AND CHRIMHILT HELD THEIR BRIDAL FEAST.—Etzel received his new bride at the town of Tuln, accompanied by a great host of vassals, among whom were Russians, Greeks, Poles, Wallachians, Kyben, the savage Petscheners, and many other nations. He had four-and-twenty princes in his train, among whom were Ramung, sovereign of the Wallachians; Gibecke, Hornbog, Hawart, and Iring, from Denmark; Irnfried, duke of Thuringia; Blodelin, the king's brother; and, finally, Dietrich of Bern. Chrim-

* Most of the towns mentioned in this and the following adventure still exist in Austria and Hungary.