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51

THE NIBELUNGEN LIED

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SIR JOHN LUBBOCK'S HUNDRED BOOKS,

51

THE NIBLUNGEN LIED

LAY OF THE NIBELUNG

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY

ALFRED G. FOSTER-BARHAM

LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LIMITED

BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL

MANCHESTER AND NEW YORK

1893

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY

OF

THOMAS CARLYLE

PREFACE

THE position of the class of "well-informed" persons with respect to the *Nibelungen Lied* or *Lay of the Nibelung* has probably not altered greatly since Carlyle wrote in 1831 that "they were obliged to profess admiration, while at the same time they only knew what they admired by name."

It is true that Wagner's glorious music in the *Niebelung's Ring* stirred listeners a few years ago to a study of his text, and that the names of Siegfried and Brunnhilda, Gunther and Hagen, became, in this way, familiar to many. But the *Nibelungen Lied* itself, the great Northern Epos or German Iliad, is, I believe, still unknown in England, save to a very few; and it is this belief which must plead as my excuse for the attempt I have made to set the story in a plain and perhaps a too literal form before the reader in the following translation.

1

PREFACE.

To attempt any account here of the chief characters and incidents in the *Lied* would carry me far beyond the limits of a preface. I can but allude to the gay fearless hero Siegfried, to the lovely Chriemhilda, and the no less lovely, but decidedly formidable Brunhilda, the dark grim Hagen, the Margrave Rüdiger of Bechlaren—so loved by all,—and many others, not forgetting the wondrous sword “Balmung,” by which there “hangs a tale.” Carlyle’s masterly essay in the second volume of his *Miscellanies* gives the story of this sword and many other particulars of interest relating to the poem; and the reader will find there some of the verses translated in his nervous, graphic style. Indeed, he is reported to have said that to translate the *Nibelungen Lied* was “the dream of his youth.”

The character of Hagen is vividly drawn throughout. You see the stern, indomitable nature of the man in every word he utters; and despite his betrayal and murder of Siegfried, a certain admiration grows towards him as he fronts the doom which he foresees so clearly. His friendship with Volker is one of the most beautiful episodes in the *Lied*, as is also the touching incident of the shield.

The nuptial scene between Gunther and his most

intractable bride is probably without a parallel, and nothing could surpass the simple straightforward way in which the old singer portrays things "unattemped yet in prose or rhyme." He has shown a wonderful skill in dealing with the marvellous, avoiding the monstrosities with which the other "hero-books" of that and of a still later period abounded, and he stands out from all his contemporaries, as Shakespeare did from the Marlowes and Fletchers.

As to the historical events and personages introduced, it is difficult to give a satisfactory explanation. Etzel, King of the Huns, is no doubt the Attila of history, though he plays but a tame part here. Attila died about the year 450. Dietrich of Bern is a historical person, but chronology stands somewhat in the way of the connection between the two shown in the *Lied*.

Who the old singer of the Nibelungen was will probably never be known. In the frescoes at Munich a certain Conrad von Würzburg is represented as writing the story. But whoever was the author, he has our gratitude and love. The narrative has the very highest merit, is well and firmly knit together, and with a happy avoidance of anything

PREFACE.

marred its beauty. As the oldest tradition of modern Europe, it possesses a high antiquarian interest. It appears to date from the latter part of the twelfth century.

MARYCOURT,
BRIDGEWATER, *March*, 1887.

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THE SONG OF THE NIBELUNG.

FIRST ADVENTURE

How Chriembilda Dreamed.

MANY a wondrous story have the tales of old,
Of feats of knightly glory, and of the Heroes bold,
Of the delights of feasting, of weeping and of wail,
Of noble deeds of daring; you may list strange things in my tale.

In Burgundy's wide plain there lived a maiden fair,
Far might you seek in vain to find such beauty rare.
Chriembild—so was she hight, she was a peerless maid,
For her shall many a knight, low in the dust be laid.

The brave and gallant lances, no shame was in their mind
To woo the maiden's glances—all to her were kind.
Fair was without measure her sweet form to view;
Her virtues were a treasure, to her sex brought honour due.

Her Guardians were three Kings, rich and of noble race,
Gunther and Gernot, in knighthood's foremost place,
And the young Geiselher, a most accomplished sword;
The maiden was their sister; the Princes had her in ward.

The Lords in birth were gentle, and of high pedigree,
In strength and courage matchless, the pride of chivalry.
The kingdom of Burgundy, so was their country named,
In Etzel's land soon after for stern deeds they were famed.

▲

They dwelt with all their power at Worms upon the Rhine,
And of proud knights the flower had they in their train,
In honourable service, who lived full manfully,
Till grievously they perished, through two fair dames' jealousy.

Dame Ute—so was called their mother the rich Queen ;
Their father was Dankrat, who left his wealth between
Them all at his life's ending ; he was a valiant man,
Who also in his springtime ample honour wan.

Such were then these Princes, as I their praise have sung,
Strong and of high courage. Their followers among
Were found the keenest Recken,¹ of whom was truly said,
In feats of skill and daring, none braver ever sped.

There was Von Troneg Hagen, with whom his brother join,
—Dankwart, the swift Degen,—from Metz Sir Ortewein ;
Also the two Margraves, Gexe and Eckewart,
Volker of Alsace, well skilled in every art.

Rumolt was Purveyor, a very chosen sword,
Sindolt and Haunolt,—the Lords could well afford
To show much courteous honour to every noble guest,—
And many other Recken, whose names unsung must rest.

Dankwart was Lord Marshal ; with him Sir Ortewein
Von Metz, his gallant nephew, Chief Sewer to the King.²
Sindolt was Cupbearer, a very peerless Knight,
And Chamberlain was Haunolt,—great honour was their right.

And of their courtly splendour, and of their proud array,
Their high and stainless virtue, and of their chivalry,
And how their life-long service so joyfully was paid,
By minstrel never fully in song can be portrayed.

¹ The words Recke, Ritter, Degen, are used for knight.

² Though Gunther, Gernot, and Geiselher were all kings, Gunther, the eldest brother, is usually called "the King" or Monarch.

HOW CHRIEMHILDA DREAMED.

It chanced that Chriemhild dreamed, by fancy sweet possessed,
That a wild Falcon she had long caressed ;
Him, with fell swoop, two Eagles seized, the which to view
Brought her such grief and trouble as before she never knew.

The dream soon to Ute, her mother, told the maid ;
Who for the best did read it, and quickly to her said,
" The Falcon, whom thou lovest, that was a noble man :
May God in safety keep him, for none other can."

" Why tell you me of men, dearest mother, say ?
Free from love of Recken will I ever stay ;
Thus fair till death o'ertake me would I seek to be,
So that from men no sorrow may ever come to me."

" Foretell it not so fully," the mother made reply ;
" Wouldest thou on earth ever taste the heart's sweetest joy,
That comes from love of Recken, a beauteous wife thou'lt be,
If the good God send hither some trusty knight to thee."

" Now, prythee, stay thy speaking," said she, " mother dear,
It can on many another be amply proven clear,
How love for its guerdon too oft receiveth pain,
From both will I keep me, naught ill shall hurt me then."

Thus in sweetest virtue serenely dwelt the maid,
While many days of sunshine flew swiftly o'er her head,
Nor found she one whose glances could quell her maiden pride ;
Yet was she soon with honour a noble hero's bride.

This was the Falcon whom her dream did send,
And as foretold her mother. •For his untimely end
How did her nearest kinsmen with bloody loss atone !
For this one death must perish many a mother's son.

THE SONG OF THE NIBELUNG.

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And as foretold her mother. • For his untimely end
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SECOND ADVENTURE.

Of Siegfried.

IN the far Netherland there lived a rich King's son
(Sigmund and Siegelind, his parents' names did run),
In a well-favoured country, and one well known to fame,
Upon the lower Rhine-stream, Santen was its name.

I tell you of the Ritter, how he grew so fair ;
Well was he guarded safely from aught of shame or care.
Strong and of high courage was soon the valiant man ;
Hei ! what mighty honour on this earth he wan !

Siegfried—so was named this Knight so true and good,—
He travelled o'er strange countries in bold and fearless mood.
Alone and in his prowess he rode through foreign lands :
Hei ! what swift Degen found he in the Burgundian bands !

Or e'er the noble Recke to man's estate had won,
Such store of strange adventures had by his hand been done,
That one of these might ever be singing in his praise :
Much must we pass in silence of Siegfried in those days.

There might wonders many have been sung and told,
In his prime of manhood, of our hero bold,
What honours round him clustered, and of his beauty rare :
Well might he win the glances of many a maiden fair.

In youth he had good training, as 'twas fitt'ing should be done
What high and noble virtues in his own nature shone !
Thus to his father's kingdom much honour did redound,
That of such knightly temper in all things he was found.

Now was he grown in stature, that he to Court might fare.
Gladly the people saw him ; the dames and maidens there
Wished that he might only at Court for ever stay ;
Well might the Prince be conscious, all did him homage pay.

Without his guards attending seldom rode the lad ;
Siegmund and Siegelind had him right bravely clad ;
And sages most renowned to help his mind to train,
Whereby he well the people, and eke the land might gain.

Grown was he now in vigour, that he his arms might bear ;
Of these, whate'er he needed, enough they gave him there.
Many lovely maidens on him fond glances threw :
Siegfried's wondrous beauty might they well with honour woo.

Then did his father Siegmund proclaim it through his Court,
To a High-tide of feasting he bade his friends resort,
And swiftly spread the tidings to many countries round,
For all, both friends and strangers, steeds and harness should
be found.

The gay and youthful nobles, who, in their Sire's degree, .
Sought the proud ranks to enter of haughty chivalry,
Were to the Jousts invited from many a kingdom broad,
Where, in one day, with Siegfried they won the knightly sword

One might tell many wonders of feast and revelry.
Siegmund and Siegelind received, as well might be,
Great honour for the presents they showered from their hands
To them was many a Recke seen pricking o'er their lands.

Four hundred armed Degen should under Siegfried go
In glittering apparel. Preparing for which show,
Was many a fair maid busy ; all loved the hero bold.
Great store of precious jewels they worked in with the gold.

These had they rich embroidered in their devices rare,
The young and haughty Recken ; enough they had to spare.
The King bade seats be ranged for many valiant men,
Where, 'neath the sun's fierce glitter, Siegfried his spurs should
win.

Trooped them to the Minster many a worthy knight,
And many noble Ritter. The elders did full right
When they the younger servèd, as once themselves had been ;
Much of pastime found they, and eke much joy therein.

Then in praise of God they first a Mass did sing.
In their hearts a mighty impulse they felt spring,
When each was called to knighthood, as went in chivalry,
And with such marks of honour as you would but rarely see.

They hastened where stood waiting their steeds in full array,
Then grew in Siegmund's Courtyard so fierce the knightly play,
That with the warlike echoes Hall and Palace rang,
When the noble Recken met with mailed clang.

The contest was waged keenly by all both old and young ;
In the rude shock opposing lances to pieces sprung ;
Upward flew the splinters, e'en to the Hall within,
From hand of sturdy Recken : this was often seen.

The Host bade cease the combat. The steeds were led away :
Many a stout shield saw one broken in the fray,
And many a precious jewel, all on the grass bestrown,
From the bright spangled bucklers, such force of blows was
shown.

The Guests to Hall invited were soon to table brought,
Where 'mid good cheer abundant their toils they soon forgot,
With wine of choicest flavour, whereof they drank their fill ;
Each guest, or friend or stranger, found honour there at will.

So gaily sped the revels until the day declined,
The nimble-footed servants yet no rest could find ;
But many costly presents received they there in hand,
For which great praise was sounded throughout King Siegmund's
land.

Then to the youthful Siegfried did his Sire resign
The land and all the castles, as with himself had been.
To all his knightly comrades the richest gifts he made :
Much joyed they for the visit they to his Court had paid.

The courtly revels lasted until the seventh day.
Siegelind the wealthy did the custom old obey,
That on her son so well-loved red gold she should bestow ;
Thus might she well merit that the people loved him so.

Soon no poor wayfarer throughout the land was seen,
Gifts of steed and clothing so lavish there had been,
As had they further only one day of life to know.
Never before had servants such largess great, I trow.

With high and courtly honours ended the revelry.
From that time well might one hear the proud nobles say,
That to the Prince they gladly would now subject be ;
But that would not Siegfried in his true loyalty.

So long as both were living, father and mother dear,
Ne'er would their son so well-loved the crown consent to wear ;
Yet nobly was his power in feats of daring seen,
So that through all the country was feared the Ritter brave and
keen.

Quarrel with him dared no man, since he his sword had donned,
Little of rest he cared for, the warrior well-renowned.
For combat sought he always, and his hand so strong
Made his fair fame ever in foreign lands be sung.

THIRD ADVENTURE.

How Siegfried went to Worms.

LITTLE of heart's trouble recked yet the hero bold,
There dwelt in Burgundy, so were the tidings told,
A maiden of such beauty as one could wish to view :
Much joy she soon should bring him, and eke much sorrow too

The praises of her beauty were carried far and wide,
And of her noble nature much was said beside ;
To many a noble Recke was the fair maid known ;
Guests enough had Gunther for her sweet sake alone.

Whoe'er might come as suitors, for her love to pray,
Chriemhild in gentle fashion answered them ever nay,
Her purpose still she cherished, she would a maid remain :
Was yet to her a stranger who in her heart so soon should reign.

Now in love's lists would enter the child of Siegelind,
All the other wooers were against him but as wind.
Well might he hope to conquer some maiden in her pride.
Soon did the lovely Chriemhild become brave Siegfried's bride.

Now counselled him his comrades, and those that served his will,
If he in steadfast wooing his purpose would fulfil,
That he should court some maiden whose rank might grace his bed.
Outspake the noble Siegfried : "Then will I Chriemhild wed,

"The fair and lovely Princess of proud Burgundy,
The peerless Queen of Beauty. This is well known to me,
No Kaiser is so mighty, but, sought he for a bride,
He might well seek in honour with this maid to be allied."

Of this, the tidings swiftly reached King Siegmund's ear.
'Twas told him by his courtiers ; himself too was aware
Of his dear son's longing. Right sorely did he rue,
That Siegfried should bestir him this royal maid to woo

The Queen too heard the tidings, the noble Siegelind,
Who for her son endured great sorrow in her mind,
For well she knew King Gunther, and all his knightly train,
Thus for our hero's wooing to grieve they were full fain.

Then spake the warrior Siegfried : "Dearest father mine,
Love of beauteous maiden will I ne'er seek to win,
If my heart's fondest wishes in wooing I must hide."
Say what they would opposing, thus did he firm abide.

"And wilt thou not be turned," King Siegmund did reply,
"Then in thy wish I also will find my heart's best joy,
And, that thou not miscarry, I'll help thee all I can ;
Yet has King Gunther with him many a stalwart man.

"And were none other present but Hagen alone,
In haughtiness he truly need give place to none,
So that I fear me greatly we shall the journey rue,
Which thou wouldst fain be taking, this noble maid to woo."

"What tell ye me of danger ?" brake bold Siegfried in ;
"Whate'er in courteous parley I may fail to win,
Will I in other fashion woo with my strong hand,
Soon will I wrest from him the people, and eke the land."

"Grieved am I at thy rashness," spake King Siegmund there ;
"And could thy haughty sayings reach Burgundian ear,
In vain were all thy striving King Gunther's land to see.
Gunther and Gernot, they are well known to me.

"With rude force in wooing shall no one win the maid,"
Spake the monarch Siegmund, "that is truly said ;
But, if with knightly following, thou to the land wouldst fare,
Our friends and our retainers we soon will summon here."

"That is not to my liking," brake then Siegfried in,
"That to the Rhine we journey with warlike following ;
Not with a banded army—it were great pain to me,
If the noble maiden thereby constrained should be.

"Constrained she shall be truly, only by my hand.
Ride will we, twelve in number, into Gunther's land :
Therein, dear Father Siegmund, assist us well you may."
Then gave they to his Recken garments bright and gay.

Now came these tidings also to his mother's ear ;
Sorely was she troubled about her son so dear :
She feared that she would lose him, through King Gunther's men ;
To weep with many tears began the noble Queen.

Siegfried the Degen went in to seek her there.
To his dear loved mother spake he with kindly cheer :
"Mother, for this my purpose in grief you need not be,
Let come who will as foemen, no harm shall fall to me.

"But help me now this journey, to Burgundy to go,
That in our equipment we make such goodly show,
As may do fairly honour to knights so brave and gay ;
For this my grateful guerdon of hearty thanks I'll pay."

"And can I not dissuade thee," Queen Siegelind did rejoin,
"To journey will I help thee, my dear and only son ;
The costliest apparel that ever knight did wear,
For thee and for thy comrades, thou shalt have and to spare."

Then to the Queen did Siegfried incline full reverently,
And said, "No other comrades would I have go with me
Than my twelve knights: their raiment, I pray thee, have in care;
Learn would I now right gladly how it may with Chriemhild fare."

Then were fair fingers busy at work both night and day,
Seldom did any tarry, no mind to rest had they,
Till for Siegfried's equipment all things ready were.
As to his journey would he no word of counsel hear.

His father bade adorn him with his full knight's array,
That thus from Siegmund's country he might fare on his way.
In their light coats of armour they were already dight,
With strong and glittering helmets, their shields were broad and
bright.

For the Burgundian journey the day now drew near.
Around them were in sorrow men and women there,
Whether again returning, they should see their native land.
Then the command was given, arms and harness to take in hand.

Rich were their steeds in beauty, their trappings golden-red :
Let who would seek for fairer, there had been little need,
Than showed the stalwart Siegfried, and those knights at his side.
Now craved he for permission to Burgundy to ride.

This gave him, full of sadness, King Siegmund and his Queen.
Both did he comfort greatly with sweet and loving mien,
And said : "For this purpose you shall not need to weep,
So will I ever bear me, that free from sorrow you may keep."

Sad was it to the Recken, stood weeping many a maid ;
Well had their hearts so gentle the sad experience made,
How oft the pang of parting foreruns death's keener tooth.
Good cause had they for weeping, sore need was theirs in sooth.

To the Rhine-beach at Worms, upon the seventh morn,
Were the bold riders gotten : their glittering raiment worn,
With gold so interwoven, their trappings golden-red ;
Right swiftly had their horses with Siegfried's comrades sped.

New were the shields they carried, bright and yet broad withal,
And gaily shone their helmets, as in King Siegmund's Hall,
At Siegfried's courtly Tourney, his gallant comrades wore.
Knights so fair apparelled saw one ne'er before.

Below their spurs when mounted, were their sword-points seen,
And in his hand each Recke carried his lance so keen.
Siegfried, the gay hero, a mighty lance did bear ;
Two spans was it in thickness, with edge of grimmest temper
rare.

The golden-coloured bridles bore they well in hand ;
The breast-piece was all silken : so rode they through the land.
On every side the people did gape at them amain :
To meet them sped full swiftly the knights in Gunther's train.

The high mettled Degen, squire as well as knight,
Came to meet the horsemen, so was it fit and right
For strangers to be welcomed in their master's land :
Their horses they took from them, and their shields from hand.

The steeds they were for leading to the stalls within,
Then to them spake swiftly Siegfried the Degen keen :
" Let stand the horses by us—mine and my knights' beside ;
As my mood now is tending, shall I soon further ride.

"Is any one here present, who may know full well,
Where I the King can meet with, that let him quickly tell,
Gunther, the wealthy monarch, King of Burgundy."
Then one did give him answer who knew well to reply :

"Would you find King Gunther, that can right soon be.
In yon Hall so spacious did I him newly see
Surrounded by his heroes. Go seek him there within,
Many a stalwart Degen with him may there be seen."c

Now to the Monarch Gunther had the news been told,
That to his land had ridden these knights of bearing bold,
Equipped with richest harness, and robes of beauty rare,
And amongst his courtiers none knew whence they were.

Gunther the King did wonder whence they ridden had,
The gay and noble Recken, in such bright raiment clad,
With shields of the best forging, bright and broad withal ;
Sore was he vexed that no one could tell him in that Hall.

Then to the King spake quickly Von Metz Sir Ortwein,
A knight he was right wealthy, and eke of noble mien :
"Since they to us are strangers, let some one swiftly run
To my uncle Hagen, to him let them be shown.

"With foreign lands and kingdoms acquainted is he well ;
If of them he has knowledge that will he to us tell."
The King bade send to fetch him, and those of his escort :
With haughty steps soon came he with his Recken to the Court.

"Wherefore has the King," quoth Hagen, "for me sent ?"
"Here to my Court have ridden some knights with strange
intent,
And no one here can name them ; * if they to you are known,
That shall by you, Hagen, to me in truth be shown."

"That will I soon," said Hagen. To the casement stepped he
then,

And on the strangers rested his glance with piercing ken ;
Well liked he their equipment, and their apparel gay,
They yet to him were strangers in realm of Burgundy.

Quoth he : " Whencesoe'er these Recken have ridden to the
Rhine,

Princes, or Princes' heralds, they may be by their mien,
Their steeds are right noble and well caparisoned ;
Whatever be their country, true heroes they'll be found."

Also spake Sir Hagen : " I will confess to you,
That though in life I never have Siegfried had in view,
Yet can I well credit, as it may chance to be,
That he it is—that Recke, who bears him so gallantly.

" New and wondrous tidings brings he to this land :
The valiant Nibelungen fell by the hero's hand,
Shilbung and Nibelung, sons of the wealthy King ;
Worked has he great wonders by his arms' mighty swing.

" As all alone one day the hero forth did ride,
He found—so it was told me—on a mountain side,
Around King Niblung's Hoard, many a Degen bold ;
Strangers they were to him until their tale was told.

" Out from the hollow mountain, into the clear daylight,
They brought King Niblung's Treasure. It was a wondrous sight
As they did seek to share it, the Nibelungen twain.
This saw the hero Siegfried, who to marvel was full fain.

" So near them had he ridden, that in their sight he came,
Clearly—as they in his. Then outspoke one of them :
' Here comes the valiant Siegfried, the hero of Netherland.'
In sooth a strange adventure he met with from their hand.

"Glad welcome to the hero gave Shilbung and Nibelung.
With one voice they besought him, these noble Princes young,
That he the Niblung Treasure would part betwixt them twain :
This begged they till at length they his consent did gain.

"Of precious stones so many he saw, as we do hear,
A hundred double wagons could not the burthen bear ;
Yet more of red gold was there from the Nibelung land :
All this should now be parted by bold Siegfried's hand.

"For recompense they gave him King Niblung's famous sword :
Little of comfort had they from the Knight's award,
Which he announced full swiftly, their craving to obey.
Fulfil their wish he could not ; such angry mood had they.

"So must he let the Treasure yet unshared remain.
Attacked him then the Degen, in the two Princes' train.
With their Sire's sword Balmung, which he had in hand,
The hero cut them off, from the Nibelung Hoard and land.

"Twelve men of might had they as friends, such is the tale,
These were in stature giants, what could it them avail ?
They all in sudden anger were slain by Siegfried's hand,
And full seven hundred Degen he drove from Nibelung land.

"Such feats he did with Balmung, King Niblung's famous sword :
Of the young knights, full many, with terror overpowered,
Which of the sword they cherished, and of the hero bold,
Put in his hands the castles, and eke the land to hold.

"The two rich Princes also he smote unto the death ;
Whereby he came, through Alberich, himself in direful scathe :
For his master's downfall swift revenge he sought,
Until of Siegfried's prowess experience he had bought.

HOW SIEGFRIED WENT TO WORMS.

"Not e'en the powerful Dwarf a match for him was shown ;
Like two fierce lions fought they upon the mountain lone,
Till Siegfried the Tarnkappe¹ from Dwarf Alberich wan,
Then of the Hoard was master, Siegfried, that fearful man.

"Those that would oppose him all scattered were or dead :
The Hoard again to carry into the cave, he bade,
From whence it first was taken, by those of Niblung's train ;
Alberich the strong, the office of Treasurer did gain.

"An oath he made him swear to serve him as his Squire,
Done has he trusty service, as his Lord did require."
So spake Von Troneg Hagen : "Thus has the hero done,
Greater strength and prowess has never Recke shown.

"Yet one of his adventures I may narrate to you :
When travelling in a forest a Dragon once he slew ;
Swift in the blood he bathed, thus hardened was his skin.
So that no sword can wound him ; this has been often seen.

"Counsel, would I, the hero to meet with friendly cheer,
That thus we may not merit he should us ill-will bear ;
So fair he is in stature, so gladsome to the eye :
Done has he in his prowess such feats of courage high."

Then answered him King Gunther : "In sooth thou counsellest
right.

How knightly there he standeth, as though arrayed for fight,
The keen and noble Recke, and those knights of his band !
Meet him ourselves will we, down thither on the strand."

"That may, by you," quoth Hagen, "with honour fit be done ;
In birth he is right noble, a rich King's only son ;
There is that too in his bearing, meseems, by Christ the Lord,
No trifle in the hearing has brought him to this bord."

¹ Tarnkappe, a mystic Cloak of Darkness, which renders the wearer invisible, and gives him the strength of twelve men.

Then answered him King Gunther : " Well, let him welcome be,
Noble he is, and valiant, so much is known to me ;
Fair entertainment shall he have in Burgundian land."
Then went the King to meet him, downwards to the strand.

The Host and all his courtiers gave him such greeting fair,
That from salute so gracious little was wanting there.
Inclined to them full lowly the Knight, with courteous mien,
Seeing that his reception had so friendly been.

" Much now do I wonder," Gunther then did say,
" Why you, most noble Siegfried, to us this visit pay,
Or what your seeking may be, at Worms upon the Rhine ?"
To the King spake the hero : " That will I clear define.

" Whilst in my father's kingdom the tidings came to me,
That at your Court (the which I heard right willingly)
The bravest knights did gather, so has it oft been said,
That e'er a monarch ruled : here therefore am I sped.

" Of your own manhood, also, such tales to me were told,
That ne'er on this earth had one beheld a king so bold.
Of this, great was the rumour, throughout the country's side ;
Till I for true had proved it, in rest I could not bide.

" I also am a Recke, and shall ascend the throne :
To my heart it dear is, that I should aye be known
Worthy to inherit the people and the land ;
Pledging my life and honour, upon this would I stand.

" If you are now as daring, as report came to me,
So ask I not if any friendly or hostile be :
By force will I obtain now the kingdom from your hand,
And to my sword will subject the castles and eke the land."

Astounded was the Monarch, and those that stood around,
When of this strange challenge the meaning they had found,
That it was Siegfried's purpose to take his land from him :
When they heard this the Recken 'gan look with glances grim.

"How have I that deserved," out spake the Knight,
"That what my Sire, long time, with his own owned as right,
To us, by overbearing strength, now lost should be ?
That were a bad example of knightly chivalry."

"I see not that it matters," brake the hero in,
"Before your rule the country may well in peace have been :
Rule it fain would I now ; yet shall my kingdom too,
O'ercom'st thou me in combat, to thee pay homage due.

"Thus shall our two realms together joined remain ;
And whosoe'er it happen shall conquer of us twain,
Him shall in service fitting the kingdoms both obey."
Up sprang Gernot and Hagen, wrathful men were they.

"This is not to our liking," Gernot did reply,
"That to win new kingdoms, these knights in death should lie,
Through any hero's prowess ; full rich our land is known,
And rightly to us subject, no better claim is shown."

Then stood around his comrades, with dark and angry mien,
Sir Ortwein Von Metz amongst them there was seen.
Quoth he : "This mode of treating brings to my heart much grief ;
Without all cause strong Siegfried does challenge you to strife."

Whereto in stormy fashion the Knight of Netherland :
"Not against me in combat dare you lift up your hand ;
I am a wealthy Monarch, you are in a king's pay,
Were there twelve such in combat it should me ne'er dismay."

Then quickly called for weapons Von Metz Sir Ortwein,
Von Troneg Hagen's nephew, sprung from a noble line,
That he so long kept silence the King sore grieved had seen :
Then forward stood Gernot, the knight so bold and keen.

To Ortwein quick spake he : " Let cease your angry mood ;
With us the Degen Siegfried shall not remain in feud ;
Part should we now in kindness, such counsel do I give,
And, as beseems us better, him as a friend receive."

Then spake the stout Sir Hagen : " In truth it irks me sore,
And all these here your Degen, that ever to our shore,
For strife he should have ridden : why let he not that be ?
From you, my Lords, was lacking no warmth of courtesy."

To whom the sturdy Siegfried replied with quick retort :
" And if it chance, Sir Hagen, my words misplease you aught,
So does it rest with you to prove, if it may be,
That my arms' prowess still holds good in Burgundy."

" That would I yet hinder," Gernot said again.
And all his knights he charged they silent should remain,
And cease their haughty par lance, the which he did upbraid.
Then thought also Siegfried of Chriemhild the fair maid.

" Unseemly were this quarrel," spake Gernot again,
" Thereby though heroes many in conflict might be slain,
To us 'twould bring small honour, and to you barren joy."
To whom did sturdy Siegfried, Siegmund's son, reply :

" Why tarries then Sir Hagen, and eke Sir Ortwein ?
Why does he not his comrades to swift strife incline,
Seeing he has so many here in Burgundland ?"
Still kept they a grim silence, such was Gernot's command.

"Here to us are you welcome," spake Ute's son again,
"And these your knightly comrades, who have ridden in your
train :
Right gladly would we serve you, I and these friends of mine."
Then bade they for the strangers pour out King Gunther's wine.

Then said the Host, King Gunther : "You shall in all command
Which we possess, if that same in honour you demand ;
Share will we with you even our wealth and our hearts' blood."
Now grew the Degen Siegfried a little gentler in mood.

Then of their steeds and trappings the Host bade take good care ;
And the best of quarters in haste they should prepare
For Siegfried's companions ; they had good entertain.
A welcome glad to Burgundy the stranger Prince did gain.

They did him ample honour there for many days,
With never-tiring pastime, and in a thousand ways ;
This had he well deserved, so high his courage shone.
Seldom did any see him but he their friendship won.

To knightly games they hastened, the Kings and all their Court ;
In these he aye was winner, whate'er might be the sport ;
His feats could no one follow, so great his strength was seen,
Whether to throw the stone, or hurl the javelin.

When it so chanced, the ladies, in all their proud array,
Came forth with beaming glances to see the knightly play,
Much favour in their bright eyes the stranger Knight did find ;
Nathless to higher conquest he had addressed his mind.

The fair and beauteous maidens for tidings swiftly sought :
"Who is he then, this Degen, of proud and foreign port ?
How passing rich his raiment, how fair he there does stand !"
Then answered them full many : "That is the hero of Netherland."

Whatever sport was toward found him right well inclined :
In his deep heart held he one lovely maid enshrined ;
To him, too, did the Fair One, whom yet he had not seen
In sweetest dawn of love, incline with trust serene.

So oft, as in the Tourney they held their armed play,
The noble knights and squires,—behold them would alway
From her curtained window, Chriemhild, the Princess fair ;
Other than this pastime sought she never there.

And had he wist she saw him, who in his heart was Queen,
So would he also pastime enough have found therein.
Could he but once behold her, in very sooth, I trow,
On earth a higher pleasure he would ne'er seek to know.

When he, amid the heroes, stood in the Castle Court,
As, in every country, such contests still are sought,
So gallantly he held him, Siegelind's noble son,
That many loving glances from maidens' eyes he won.

And oftentimes he pondered : " What hope is there for me,
That this all-beauteous maiden I with my eyes may see ?
She whom I love so dearly, whom I have sought so long,
Is still to me a stranger, with grief I think thereon."

Oft as the wealthy Princes throughout the land did ride,
Their knights, in duty bounden, did journey at their side,
And Siegfried rode out with them ; then was sore parting seen :
Many a tender longing followed their track, I ween.

Thus dwelt he with these Princes, as I have truly said,
While time crept on full swiftly,—a year now soon had sped,
And yet not once he ever had seen the maiden fair,
She, who in joy and sorrow, his lot so soon should share.

FOURTH ADVENTURE.

Siegfried fights with the Saxons.

THROUGHOUT King Gunther's country strange tidings now there
went

By Envoys, who, far riding, had to his Court been sent,
From unknown Recken coming, who yet much hate him bore :
As he the tidings gathered in sooth it grieved him sore.

I tell you of these Recken : it was King Lüdeger,
From out the Saxon kingdom, a Prihee had much in fear,
With him too was Lüdegast of Denmark, the proud King ;
Many a noble Recke they in their train did bring.

In embassy all hostile their Envoys did repair
To King Gunther's country, their message to declare ;
Around them pressed full many, to know what news they brought,
And led them swiftly onward to the rich King's Court.

Fairly the King did greet them, and said : " Welcome be ;
He who has sent you hither is yet unknown to me :
I pray ye, tell me quickly," spake the Monarch good.
Then feared the Envoys greatly for angry Gunther's mood.

" With your leave, Sire, granted, that we may now reveal
The message that we carry, we will nought conceal.
We name to you the Princes, whose Envoys here we stand,
Lüdegast and Lüdeger—they will seek you in this land.

"Their wrath you have aroused ; well have we understood,
That, against you, both Princes cherish a mortal feud.
To Worms, upon the Rhine-beach, an army they will lead ;
Many a knight is with them, of this you shall take heed.

"Or e'er twelve weeks are over their march they will begin :
Have you of staunch friends any, so let it now be seen,
That they may help in guarding your castles and your lands ;
Helmets and shields many shall be broken by their hands.

"Or would you seek a treaty, so let it swift appear,
That these hostile troopers come not your country near,
Fraught with such bitter purpose, and to your dire dismay,
Many a noble Ritter shall perish in that fray."

"Awhile you here shall tarry," the Monarch spake then so,
"This must I needs consider, my mind you then shall know.
Have I yet trusty Degen, it shall to them be told,
Such weighty tidings must I to my friends unfold."

Now on the wealthy Gunther the message pressed full sore ;
The Envoys' speech right sadly within his heart he bore.
He bade them call Sir Hagen and others of his Court,
And to the princely Gernot a summons soon was brought.

Of his knights the bravest came quickly to his side.
He said : "Our foes do purpose to this our land to ride
With strong array of forces, the news you well may rue."
Then answered him Gernot, the Knight so brave and true.

"Our swords shall stay their marching," so did Gernot reply,
"Those only fall who must—in death they well may lie.
Than my life far dearer my honour is to me :
Whoe'er may come as foemen to us shall welcome be.

Then spake Von Troneg Hagen : " That seems to me not good,
Lüdegast and Lüdeger are of right haughty mood,
So short the time, our army we scarce can muster well : "
So counselled the stout Recke, " the news to Siegfried they
should tell."

Then found they proper lodging for the Envoys and their train ;
Whatever hate he bore them, gave them good entertain,
Gunther, the wealthy Monarch (as fitting was indeed),
Till he his friends had proven, who would help him in his need.

King Gunther in his heart bore sorrow and much care.
Of his beclouded visage a Knight was soon aware,
Who knew not to interpret what this might betide,
So begged he of the Monarch his trouble to confide.

Then spake the warrior Siegfried : " Great wonder fills me here,
To see you thus forsaking your sports and pleasant cheer,
Wherein you wont so often with us to take delight."
To whom thus answered Gunther, the very peerless Knight :

" Well may I not permit it that all the world should hear,
Of the grief which hidden in my breast I bear :
Of the heart's need one only to staunchest friend dare plain."
Then changed Prince Siegfried's colour from white to red again.

To the King said the hero, " Nought have I you denied,
Help you will I right gladly, whatever may betide ;
If for friends you are seeking, of them will I be one,
And trust the name to merit, with honour, till life be done."

" Now God reward you, Siegfried, your speech it likes me well ;
And though your strength and courage my troubles ne'er dispel,
Yet am I glad in hearing of this your loving mind :
If my life be spared, I will repay it in kind.

"I will now freely tell you what has this trouble wrought.
From my foes come hither some Envoys to this Court,
To say that with an army our land they will invade :
On us has such a foray by knights been never made."

"Let not that greatly vex you," Siegfried the Degen said,
"Quiet your mind, in this you shall by me be led ;
Let me now win for you honour and profit too,
And let your knights be summoned, that they give service due.

"Then, though your stout foemen should come with force in
hand

Of thirty thousand Degen, I would them withstand
Had I a thousand only ; leave it to me, I pray."
Then answered him King Gunther, "This will I well repay."

"Now help me," said the Degen, "to choose a thousand men
From out your train, my following will only furnish then
These twelve, my sturdy Recken ; so will I guard your land :
True and ready service shall you have at Siegfried's hand.

"In this shall Hagen help us, and eke Sir Ortewoin,
Dankwart and Sindolt, those trusty knights of thine ;
And with us too shall follow Volker the Degen keen :
Our Standard shall he carry, braver sword was never seen.

"And bid return these Envoys back to their Master's land,
There they full soon shall see us, that let them understand,
Thus shall our towns and castles in safety still be found."
Then bade the King to summon his friends and knights around.

To Court they soon were wending whom Lütdeger had sent,
That they so soon should journey gave them much content ;
Rich gifts then bade present them, Gunther, the Monarch good,
And eke a trusty escort ; so were they pleased in mood.

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ing Lüdeger also stirred up his Saxons to the war,
 orty thousand warriors he had with him and more,
 ith whom to ride, he purposed, into Burgundian ground.
 y this time had King Gunther to all his friends sent round,

o summon his retainers, and all his brother's train,
 hoever would them follow, to serve in this campaign,
 lso to Hagen's Recken : such is the hero's fate.
 on must the faithful Deen prepare their death to meet.

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More urgently they hasted their friends around to court,
Until the Monarch Lûdegast, from his valiant train,
Twenty thousand Degen had for his army ta'en.

King Lûdeger also stirred up his Saxons to the war,
Forty thousand warriors he had with him and more,
With whom to ride, he purposed, into Burgundian ground.
By this time had King Gunther to all his friends sent round,

To summon his retainers, and all his brother's train,
Whoever would them follow, to serve in this campaign,
Also to Hagen's Recken : such is the hero's fate.
Soon must the faithful Degen prepare their death to meet.

To arm they now did hasten. When they their march began,
Their Standard gay did carry Volker the valiant man ;
Thus o'er the Rhine they ferried, from Worms away to ride :
Hagen, the Knight Von Troneg, must their army guide.

Sindolt did with them follow, and the brave Haunolt,
Full well they both did merit to share King Gunther's gold ;
Dankwart, Sir Hagen's brother, and Ortewein were there,
Well might they both with honour the expedition share.

"Sir King," then said Siegfried, "do you at home remain,
The while with me these Degen seek the battle-plain ;
With the dames do you tarry, and keep your courage high,
For in my safe keeping shall your wealth and honour lie.

"For those that seek you hither at Worms upon the Rhine,
To save them such a journey the care it shall be mine ;
In their own land we quickly will harass them so near,
That all their haughty bluster shall change to grief and fear."

Then from the Rhine, through Hessen, did the heroes ride
Towards the Saxon country : their mettle soon was tried.
With burning and with plunder they laid the land full low,
Whereby did both the Princes much care and sorrow know.

Now, as their foes grew nearer, fell in each knight and squire ;
Siegfried, the trusty hero, began then to inquire,
"Who o'er the camp and baggage in charge would there remain ?"
A more disastrous contest did the Saxons ne'er sustain.

'Twas counselled to deliver the baggage to the care
Of the warrior Dankwart, he was of courage rare :
Less loss they thought to suffer from those in Lûdeger's pay,
If Dankwart and Sir Ortewein would with the rearguard stay.

"Myself will hasten forward," said Siegfried the Knight,
"That these foes, so doughty, I may have well in sight,
Till, where their knights are stationed, the knowledge I have won."
In armour then soon glistened fair Siegelind's gallant son.

Before he left, the army to Hagen's charge he gave,
And with him Gernot joined, the Recke keen and brave.
Then o'er the Saxon country he rode forth all alone ;
Many a stout buckler he broke e'er set of sun.

He saw a mighty army, which lay encampèd there,
And far surpassed the forces which he could bring to bear ;
Forty thousand were they, haply yet even more :
Siegfried, in high courage, surveyed them gladly o'er.

It chanced too that a Recke from out the hostile host
To reconnoitre chosen, kept there the sentry's post :
Him saw the Degen Siegfried, whom eke the Knight did spy :
Each did the other quickly with anger fierce defy.

Now who it was, I tell you, who thus kept watch alone ;
A shield of gold all glittering on his arm there shone ;
It was in sooth King Lüdegast, who guarded thus his host ;
Swiftly the noble stranger sprang to meet him at his post.

Now had King Lüdegast started as his foe drew near ;
Onward their steeds in fury each knight did urge with spur,
With all their force their lances at hostile shield inclined :
Thence did the wealthy Monarch himself in trouble find.

To the sharp spur obedient, their steeds like arrows swift
Bore the kings together, as did the wind them lift :
Soon in their seats recovered, met each with knightly skill ;
In grimmest mood the combat with swords decide they will.

Then struck the Degen Siegfried, that all the field did ring :
From the helm was flying, as if a brand did swing,
The sparks all red and fiery 'neath the hero's might ;
His match there in the other had fairly found each knight.

On him too laid King Lüdegast many a grisly stroke ;
Upon each other's bucklers their utmost force they broke.
Now from the Danes had thirty swiftly thither run,
But e'er they came to rescue, Siegfried the fight had won,

With three strong strokes and mighty, which he the King did
give
Through his shining armour ; no more then could he strive.
The sword of such keen temper let through each wound the blood.
Came thus the haughty Lüdegast to a right piteous mood.

For his life he craved, and offered all his land,
And that his name was Lüdegast he let him understand.
Thereon came up his Degen, who had clearly seen
What contest 'twixt the warriors upon the watch had been.

Lead him away would Siegfried : then was he straight beset
By all the thirty Degen ; nor vigour lacked him yet,
To guard his wealthy captive with wondrous strokes of might :
Soon wrought he them worse mischief, the brave and sturdy
Knight.

To the death the thirty he slew in self-defence,
Save one whose life he spared, who rode full swiftly thence
To tell what had befallen, in words as he might best :
The truth was all too plainly seen by his bloody crest.

The haughty knights of Daneland must great sorrow share,
When of their Master's capture they were made aware ;
The tidings reached his brother, who stormed right lustily
With sudden anger roused,—sorely grieved was he.

Soon to Gunther's servants was the Danish Knight
At camp delivered over, by brave Siegfried's might ;
He gave him to Sir Hagen in charge ; when it was known
The captive was King Lüdegast there was scant sorrow shown.

The word was quickly given to set their colours on :
" Up, up," shouted Siegfried, " here shall much be done
Or e'er the day declineth, if I am spared my life."
That rueful in Saxon country many a sorrowing wife.

" Ye heroes from the Rhineland, in me ye safe can trust,
Right well can I lead you against King Lüdeger's host ;
One crested helm they now have, hewn by a stout knight's blow:
E'er we again will turn us much trouble they shall know."

Swift on their steeds they mounted, Gernot and all his clan,
Their Standard to the breezes gave the brave Fiedelman
Volker, the Knight of Alsace,—in front he led the way.
The very squires and servants were eager for the fray.

There were but of the Degen a thousand men in all,
To which add the twelve Recken. O'erhead a heavy pall
Of dust began to hover. O'er the land they rode ;
One saw amongst them glancing many a buckler broad.

Now drew the Saxons also with their army near,
With swords of keenest temper, as one well might hear ;
With sturdy grasp the Degen their weapons held in hand :
Fain would they keep the strangers from their castles and their
land.

Now met the foes together in battle's close array.
Siegfried, with his twelve Recken, was first to lead the way ;
The gay and gallant lances he brought from Netherland,
That day in storm of battle flashed many a bloody brand

Sindolt and Haunolt, and brave Gernot too,
Where the fight was thickest cut, a fell pathway through,
Before their sturdy prowess to their foes was known.
For this must soon be wailing many a widow lone.

Volker and Hagen, and eke Ortwein,
Clouded in the battle many a helmet's shine,
With the blood down flowing,—so keen they were in fight.
Dankwart too did prove him a brave and valiant Knight.

Nor stayed the Danish Recken. On their foes they sprang,
Sturdy strokes exchanging. Shields and helmets rang.
Keen swords swiftly flashing were shivered with the blow ;
The highly mettled Saxons worked there harm enow.

As the Burgundian Recken pressed fiercely to the fray,
Many a wound all gaping told where they forced their way ;
Overgilded saddles ran the crimson blood :
They sought thus knightly honour, the heroes brave and good.

And ever where the battle waged fiercest hand to hand,
With swords of grimmest temper, the knights of Netherland
After their Master followed into the thickest fight :
Well did the twelve on that day with Siegfried play the knight

Of those from the Rhineland could none keep up with them.
In Siegfried's track one noted full well the blood-red stream
Flowing beneath his sword-strokes, from shields and helmets
bright,

Till amongst his troopers on Lûdeger he could light.

Thrice was he now returned from making circuit wide
Of the hostile army ; Sir Hagen rode beside,
Who helped him right bravely in his eager quest.
Before them soon lay smitten many a Ritter's crest.

When the Monarch Ludeger the hero Siegfried saw,
And how on high uplifted in his hand he bore
Balmung the sword, wherewith he to death so many hewed,
Then was the haughty Degen in grim and wrathful mood.

Great was the rush of battle, mighty the clash of steel,
As the sturdy warriors together fierce did wheel :
With so much greater fury each knight the other sought,
The troops gave back in wonder, so wrathful was their port.

The sturdy Saxon ruler all too well had learnt
His brother was ta'en prisoner, thence he in anger burnt ;
He knew too who had done it, that it was Siegelind's son.
Some said it was Gernot ; the truth he found too soon.

With sword-blows so mighty struck King Ludeger,
That beneath his saddle his horse did backwards rear ;
Him did he quick recover. The valiant Siegfried too,
'Mid the fell storm did fashion a fearful pathway through.

Hagen and Gernot did him right well bestead,
Dankwart and Volker also :—around lay many dead :
Sindolt and Haunolt, and Ortwein the Knight,
Many a heap of bodies left in the grim fight. *

Together in the battle the noble Princes were ;
Over their helmets, shattered, fell many a broken spear,
On the bright shields splintered, which in their hands they bore ;
Many a buckler border with blood was crimsoned o'er.

In the fierce storm of conflict hasted many a one
To spring from off his charger. Together then did run
Siegfried the bold Degen, and King Ludeger ;
Around them flew swift arrows, and many a keen-edged spear.

The shield-claps of the Monarch broke under Siegfried's hand ;
For victory well hoped now the hero of Netherland
Over the sturdy Saxons ; they had much stress to bear.
Hei ! what glittering bucklers brake bold Dankwart there !

Now by the Monarch Lüdeger upon a shield was seen
A crown emblazoned over ; 'twas Siegfried's crest, I ween.
Thus knew he he was fighting with this powerful man ;
Aloud then to his followers, to call, the King began :

“ Ho ! cease ye from the combat, all ye who do me fear !
The stalwart son of Siegmund have I encountered here,
The mighty hero Siegfried, him did I newly see ;
Some wicked devil surely has sent him to Saxony.”

The Standards of the Army to lower then he bade.
For peace he'd fain be suing when the fit time had sped.
So must he go as hostage into Gunther's land :
To this had compelled him mighty Siegfried's hand.

On both sides had the battle ceased with one accord :
Of broken helmets many, and eke of bucklers broad,
Upon one side they gathered ; whate'er of these they found,
Burgundian steel had clouded with blood from many a wound.

Whome'er they would they captured, full power they had indeed.
Gernot and Hagen, the brave Knights, took heed
The wounded should be cared for ; away they journeyed then,
And to the Rhine led captive five hundred stalwart men.

The defeated Recken to Denmark rode away.
Nor had the sturdy Saxons so shone in the affray,
That they praise could challenge ; to sorrow they were fain.
Their friends too were in mourning for those in battle slain.

The weapons ta'en in combat they to the Rhine did bear.
Well might they thank one Degen that they the victors were,
That was the hero Siegfried—his was the conquering hand ;
Of this bore ready witness Gunther's whole command.

To Worms on Rhine swift tidings sent forward Prince Gernot,
That to his friends expectant the glad news might be brought,
How victory had been given to him and to his train ;
Fairly might they merit all honour there to gain.

The messengers rode swiftly ; soon were the tidings known :
What joy exulting had they, who late such grief had shown,
When the report so welcome was to their ears conveyed.
Many a noble lady anxious question made :

" How had Gunther's Recken in the fierce battle shone ?"
Then of the swift Envoys Chriemhilda sent for one,
But sent for him in secret in her maiden's pride ;
One was amongst the Degen on whom her heart relied.

When in her quiet chamber the messenger appeared,
Chriemhild, the lovely maiden, gave him a kindly word :
" Now tell me joyous tidings and I will give you gold,
Your friend will I be ever, if you the truth unfold.

" My brother, Prince Gernot, in fight how has he sped,
And others of my kinsmen, are any left there dead ?
And which knight was the bravest ? I pray thee tell to me."
The messenger then answered : " Never a check had we.

" In the dread shock of battle rode other none so well,
Fair and honoured Princess, that must I truly tell,
As the noble stranger from the Netherland :
Great wonders there were wroughten by bold Siegfried's hand.

"Whate'er the other Recken might in combat gain,
Dankwart and Hagen, and all the rich King's train,
How brave soe'er they foughten, it was but as a wind
Compared to Siegfried's prowess—child of Siegelind.

"Many a knight they truly vanquished in the fray ;
But of the daring wonders no one the half could say,
Which Siegfried there accomplished as through the host he
rode.

To many a dame his presence did great trouble bode.

"Before him swiftly perished the hope of many a bride.
His mighty strokes resounded on helmets far and wide,
Till from the wounds all gaping outpoured the flowing blood :
He is in every contest a Ritter brave and good.

"Whoe'er might chance to counter Von Metz Sir Ortewein,
In quest of aught of honour he with his sword might win,
Before his might was humbled or wounded or half-killed.
Your brother too did prove him a knight most rarely skilled,

"In such a storm of battle as seldom one might see.
The truth in this encounter frankly told may be :
Showed the proud Burgundians such high mettle there,
That for loss of honour they may have little fear.

"Beneath their hands was many a blood-stained saddle cleared,
While o'er the field resounding their ringing swords were heard.
The Recken from the Rhineland behaved them every one,
That of a truth their foemen had left them best alone.

"And eke the stalwart Troneger struck many a heavy blow,
Where 'mid the shock of battle the strife swayed to and fro.
So many fell there vanquished 'neath brave Hagen's hand,
That long thereof the story will ring in Burgundland.

-- Sindolt and Haunolt, in Prince Gernot's train,
And Rumolt the bold Recke, fought with such might and main,
That Lûdeger may truly sorrow for evermore,
That he should e'er your brother have troubled on this shore.

"Lady, the very highest who in the battle shone,
From first unto the finish, as seen by every one,
That was the Degen Siegfried, so knightly was his hand ;
Rich hostages he hither brings to Gunther's land.

"These with his arm so mighty captured the valiant Knight,
One is the Monarch Lûdegast, sorry is his plight,
And also he of Saxony, his brother Lûdeger :
Now to my wondrous story, gracious Queen, give ear !

"Both of these kings were captured by brave Siegfried's hand ;
Hostages so precious came never to this land,
As now, through his prowess, the Rhine-stream soon shall see."
To the Princess the tidings could not more welcome be.

"They bring perhaps five hundred or more of stalwart men,
And of those slain in combat there are, most noble Queen,
Of biers red full eighty laid in this our land ;
These have, for most part, fallen by brave Siegfried's hand.

"They who with pride so haughty would seek us here on Rhine
Must now as captives figure in King Gunther's train :
With joy throughout Burgundy they will be hither brought."
Her colour fair grew deeper as she the tidings caught.

Her face, so sweet and lovely, now blushed a rosy red,
That crowned with such glory out of the conflict dread
Had fared thus young Siegfried, the true and noble Knight ;
She joyed too for her kinsmen, as was fit and right.

Then spake the lovely maiden : "Thy tale thou hast well told,
Therefore thou shalt have guerdon, ten good marks of gold,
And rich and rare apparel ; these shall they to thee bear."
Well may one tell such tidings to a rich lady's ear.

They gave him then his guerdon of gold and costly gear.
Now to the casements hasted many a maiden fair,
And looked towards the highway by which they were to ride,
As to the Rhine returning they came in warlike pride.

First came the sturdy Degen, the wounded followed near ;
The greetings of their townsmen they well unshamed might hear.
To meet his guests King Gunther rode gladly o'er the plain,
In joy full soon had ended all his care and pain.

His own he kindly welcomed, and eke the strangers too,
As 'twas right and fitting a wealthy King should do.
Good thanks he owed these Degen, who were returning there ;
Well had they in the battle upheld his honour clear.

Then bade the Monarch Gunther inquire throughout his train,
Who, on the field of battle, had been lost or slain :
Of his troop none were missing, save only sixty men ;
For these they fain must sorrow as it before has been.

Many a battered target, and many a broken helm,
Brought the knights home returning to King Gunther's realm.
Before the royal Palace they from their horses sprang ;
With many a fond embracing great was the mailed clang.

Then to the Recken gave they good quarters in the town.
For his guests' ease and comfort the King saw as his own ;
The wounded had attendance with ample rest and care :
Well did he let his kindness to his foes appear.

SIEGFRIED FIGHTS WITH 1 2 SAXONS.

To Lûdegast then spake he : " You shall welcome be.
Great injury I suffered through your raid on me ;
That will we now pass over, since I the day have won.
May God reward my friends ; they have good service done."

" Well may you thank them truly," answered Lûdeger,
" Hostages so precious won no Monarch e'er.
For knightly usage will we a heavy ransom pay,
And that your foes may favour find in your eyes, we pray."

" You both shall," quoth King Gunther, " depart unhurt and
free ;
But that your hostile bearing from this time ended be,
I must have ample surety that you not quit this land,
Except in peace confirmed." Thereto gave Lûdeger his hand.

Well rested were the warriors with goodly entertain,
And soon on easy couches were many wounded lain.
To the soldiers gave they wine and the best of food :
Never before were comrades seen in merrier mood.

The broken shields and bucklers were placed in proper care ;
Of blood-besprinkled saddles enough they had to spare :
But these from sight were hidden, thus ladies' tears were spare.
Many a worthy Ritter all travel-worn appeared.

For his guests King Gunther cared thus in gracious mood.
With kinsmen and with strangers the country overflowed ;
For those severely wounded the best he bade them do :
How had that pride fallen which they so lately knew !

To those most skilled in healing rich returns were made,
Present of sterling silver, and of pure gold unweighed,
When the wounded heroes to health they did restore.
To his guests Gunther added many a present more.

Whoever homeward turning his journey would begin
Was pressed the more to tarry, as with dear friends is seen.
The King was well advised when thus his bounty shone :
Fair fame and great honour had his followers won.

Then spake the princely Gernot : " Let each fare on his way,
But when six weeks are over, hear it now all who may,
To a High-tide of feasting again you shall repair :
Healed will then be many who now lie wounded here."

Leave to depart sought also Siegfried of Netherland,
But when it chanced that Gunther his wish did understand,
Most lovingly he pressed him that he would there remain :
Were it not for his sister this would ne'er have been.

The hero was too mighty that they should give him gold ;
Well had he deserved Gunther's love to hold,
And that of all his kinsmen, who full well had seen
In the late battle's turmoil how great his strength had been.

For sake of the dear loved one to tarry pleased him well,
Perchance he thus might see her, which quickly too befell :
E'en to his utmost longing the maiden's love he gained ;
Then with what joy he journeyed back to King Siegmund's land.

King Gunther bade them daily knightly games to hold ;
Shared in these right gladly many a Ritter bold :
Meantime were seats erected at Worms upon the strand,
For those who to the Tourney should come to Burgundland.

Now while for their coming the day began draw near,
The tidings swift had circled to fair Chriemhild's ear,
That with his friends a High-tide to hold was Gunther bent :
Then might you see fair ladies with eager thoughts intent .

SIEGFRIED FIGHTS WITH THE SAXONS.

On costly stuffs and dresses, which they thereat might wear.
Dame Ute, the Queen Mother, the tidings too did hear
Of all these haughty Recken whom she should entertain :
Many rich robes were taken from chests where they had lain.

For sake of her dear children she bade gay suits prepare,
Wherein might deck their beauty dames and maidens fair,
And also the young Recken from all the country round.
Care too was ta'en that strangers had costly raiment found.

FIFTH ADVENTURE.

How Siegfried first saw Chriemhilda.

Now saw one daily heroes pricking to the Rhine,
Who in the courtly Tourney willingly would join.
Gunther's sturdy liegemen did loving service show ;
To all were freely offered mantles and steeds enow.

Then for the chiefs and nobles, as the story goes,
In the place of honour cushioned seats uprose,
Two and thirty Princes came to the High-tide gay :
Bestirred them all the ladies in fair contest for the day.

Showed himself right busy the young Geiselher,
His countrymen and strangers with graceful courtly cheer
Received he with Gernot, and all the Princes' train :
Well greeted they the Degen, as honoured custom did obtain.

Of gold-red saddles many were seen coming to the land ;
Shields of rich embossing and apparel grand
Brought men to the Rhine-beach, this noble Tourney to :
Many a weary patient felt joy and heart anew.

In bed still lay the wounded, and little peace could find—
How bitter had been death, that must they bear in mind ;
The feeble and the ailing men ceased now to bewail,
So gladly did each welcome the coming festival.

Hei ! how they revelled gaily in hospitable joy !
Delights exceeding number, pleasures without alloy,
Had all men for the asking, as many as came to hand :
Then was there great rejoicing throughout King Gunther's land.

One saw at early morning, on a day at Whitsuntide,
Gloriously apparelled, many a Ritter ride,
Five thousand in number to the High-tide gay ;
Each vied with the other in all knightly play.

Now in his thoughts had Gunther what long he knew 'forehand,
How with deepest longing the hero of Netherland
In love was with his sister, though her he ne'er had seen,
Whom, before every maiden, men judged the prize to win.

He spake : " Now give me counsel, friends and kinsmen dear,
How for the coming Tourney we may best prepare,
That after it is ended no man shall us abuse :
For behind all our labour lies the praise which we may lose."

Then quickly to King Gunther replied Sir Ortwein :
" Would you with full honour in this Tourney shine,
So let the royal maidens before the guests be seen,
Thereby you will much favour in all Burgundy win.

" For what to man so blissful, what gives him such delight,
As fair and lovely maidens, and noble ladies bright ?
Then let your beauteous sister before the guests appear."
This counsel many a hero did with great pleasure hear.

" That will I gladly follow," Gunther did reply.
All who heard the tidings received them with much joy.
The King then sent his summons to Ute's daughter fair,
That she, with her maidens, should to the Court repair.

Then from out the presser ~~gowning~~ were ta'en,
Such as in the coffers of mighty States were seen,
Of jewels and of laces they had plenty ready laid.
So decked herself right bravely many a lovely maid.

Many a gallant Recke wished then so eagerly,
That he might find favour in a fair lady's eye,
That he would not have bartered for this a rich King's crown :
Right glad were they at meeting those whom they had known.

Then bade the wealthy Monarch that with Chriemhild should go
A hundred of his Recken, for her service chosen so,
With her and with her mother, each with his sword in hand :
So was it at the Tournaments in the Burgundian land.

Ute, the Queen Mother, came in royal state,
And of fair dames in waiting an assemblage great,
More than a hundred were they in costly robes arrayed ;
Followed with her daughter many a noble maid.

Forth from the royal chambers to issue they were seen.
Then was there a great thronging of knights and Degen keen,
Who stood there all awaiting if it indeed might be,
That this noble maiden they to their joy should see.

Then came the lovely one, as does the rosy morn
Through sombre clouds advancing. From Siegfried's heart
love-lorn

Fled all the care that bound him, and which he long had known ;
Before him now the maiden in queenly beauty shone.

Upon her raiment glittered many a jewel rare,
Her rosy colour mantling lit up her face so fair.
Let who would have the chodding, his award must have been,
That ne'er in any country he had aught so lovely seen.

As the bright Queen of heaven steps forth before each star,
Above the clouds high soaring, in sheen so pure and clear,
So shone the beauteous maiden o'er other ladies nigh :
Many a hero gazing was filled with courage high.

Her Chamberlains so wealthy before her cleared the way ;
The fiery-tempered Degen would no longer stay ;
They pressed on ever nearer where they might see the maid.
Siegfried the brave hero was both pleased and sad.

Within himself he communed : " How could I ever deem,
That I thy love could conquer ? That was an idle dream ;
But if I now must lose thee, fain were I rather dead."
With such thoughts beclouded his colour came and sped.

Thus stood the son of Siegelind so beauteous to be seen,
As if on some parchment limned he had been
By art of a great master : each must own it true,
That ne'er yet in his lifetime so fair a knight he knew.

They who the Princess guarded sent forward on the way,
To clear the road before her, many a herald gay.
Much gladdened were the Degen to see the lovely maid :
With her came many ladies in courtly robes arrayed.

Then from the knights of Rhineland outspake the Prince Gernot :
" The hero who so nobly has us good service wrought,
I pray thee, Brother Gunther, give him now some reward
Before all these your Recken : none jesteth at my word.

" Bid hither the Knight Siegfried to my sister's side,
And let the maiden greet him,—so joy shall us betide ;
She, who ne'er Recke greeted, shall not be coy therein,
Thus this doughty champion to our service we may win."

King Gunther's friends went quickly where they saw the warrior
stand ;

Then spake they to the hero from the far Netherland :

"The King has given order to Court you shall repair,

His sister fair shall greet you, such honour waits you there.

Right joyous was the hero when he the message knew,

In his heart how swiftly love his care o'erthrew,

That he the beauteous daughter of Ute now should meet :

Most lovingly the maiden did Sir Siegfried greet.

When she before her standing saw Siegfried's noble son,

How quickly flushed her colour. Then spake the lovely one :

"Sir Siegfried, you are welcome, noble Knight and good."

At such kind greeting was he elated much in mood.

Fondly he bent towards her, as he his thanks would pay ;

Then each toward the other eager love did sway :

While standing thus together their kindling eyes did meet,

The hero and the maiden, in stolen glances sweet.

Whether with gentle pressure her white hand tenderly

He clasped in loving fealty, that is unknown to me ;

Yet, if I err not greatly, it must so have been :

Two hearts so pure and loving would not have failed therein.

In the bright hours of Summer, in the sweet days of May,

Through his deep heart shall never again such pulses sway

Of pure unsullied rapture as o'er his spirit moved

When by her side he wandered—the maiden whom he loved.

Then thought many a Recke : "Hei ! would 'twere so for me,

That with her I might wander as I the hero see ;

Or that I lay beside her ! That were bliss, I ween

Never before served hero such a beauteous queen.

From whatever country a guest arrivèd there,
In all the courtly pageant he notèd but this pair.
Leave had she to greet him, the noble hero true :
On this earth he never such bliss unsullied knew.

Then the King of Denmark stood forth and quickly spake :
"I must in truth acknowledge, for my own honour's sake,
That many pale and wounded lie by Siegfried's hand ;
God grant that he may never again seek Denmark's land."

Again the heralds summoned the people to give way
Before the lovely Princess : many a Recke gay,
Clad in rich apparel, with her to Church did move.
Then for a time must sever the hero from his love.

So went she to the Minster with many a lady fair.
In her rich queenly robing her beauty shone so rare
That, from high purpose bending, thoughts took lower flight ;
Of chosen Degen many beheld her with delight.

Scarcely had Siegfried patience till ceased the psalmody ;
To his good star might he ever thankful be,
That she him so favoured whom in his heart he wore :
Well, too, did he merit the love that she him bore.

As she—the service ended—from out the Minster went,
Quick to her returning the hero's steps were bent.
Then began erst to thank him the fair and lovely maid,
That before all the Recken he so brave a part had played.

"God grant you now, Sir Siegfried," so spake the beauteous one,
"That as you have deserved—which all must fairly own—
So may our Recken love you with true fidelity."
Then 'gan he on Chriemhilda to look most tenderly.

"For ever will I serve you," *Brünnin* swift did say,
"Nor will I, for rest seeking, e'er my head down lay
Until your wish be honoured, while life remains to me :
So much in your service, Lady Chriemhild, shall be."

For the twelve days succeeding, at the sweet break of day,
One saw beside the hero the joyous maiden stray,
As she to Court early before her friends would go
How great his love the hero did by his service show

Gladsome sights and pleasures, and festive revels
On each day ensuing Gunther's halls did see ;
While in and out were passing many a stalwart man,
Ortwein and Hagen great feats of skill began.

If any wished for practice, thereto were quickly dight,
In number without limit, the Degen keen in fight.
Before the guests the Recken thus let themselves be known ;
Thereby much praise and honour Gunther's country won.

The wounded lay so restless, they would challenge e'en the air ;
With the attending servants merry and gay they were,
Would with their bucklers shield them, and hurl the dart away ;
Such pastime helped them greatly, much vigour yet had they.

At this feast and Tourney Gunther bade provide
All the best of dishes ; there should not abide
One want—though 'twere the smallest—which he could prevent :
Amongst his guests the Monarch with courteous bearing went.

He said : "Ye gallant Recken, before ye homewards fare,
Take now of my gifts—so shall my love appear.
For ever will I thank you ; scorn not my bounty good :
To share my wealth amongst you so am I fixed in mood."

Then quickly spake to Gunther the Danish knights at hand :
" Before again returning we ride home to our land,
In a sure peace confirm us, thereof we Knights have need ;
Of our friends full many are through your Degen dead."

Healed of his wounds so grievous was Lûdegast by this time,
The Saxon chief had fairly recovered use of limb.
Of the dead were many beneath Burgundian ground.
Then went the Monarch Gunther where he Siegfried found.

Then spake he to the hero : " Advise me now, I pray :
Our guests, with early morning, would ride forth on their way.
Fain would they pay a ransom me and my realm to quit ;
Now counsel me, Sir Siegfried, what seemeth to you fit.

" Wherein these lords are trusting, that shall you quickly hear;
What weight five hundred horses of untold gold may bear,
That would they gladly offer, their freedom now to win."
Replied the warrior Siegfried : " You would do wrong therein.

" Free and unhindered shall you let them depart from here ;
Only, that these bold Recken in future may beware
Of making hostile foray into this your land,
Let them in true faith pledge you each one his knightly hand."

" Your counsel will I follow ; thus depart they shall."
Then to his foes the tidings did some one quickly tell,
The gold should not be taken which they proffered had.
On their weary journey the friends departed sad.

Many a shield with treasure well laden then was brought ;
These with his guests he shared, with kindly purpose fraught,
Five hundred marks, or better, such presents there were seen ;
So Gernot counselled Gunther—the Knight so brave and keen.

They begged now for permission to ride thence on their way ;
The guests all went to Chriemhild their parting word to say,
And also to the Palace, where Ute Queen did reign.
Such a gracious parting ne'er had knights again.

Empty grew the quarters, as on their way they rode ;
Yet, with courtly custom, still in the land abode
The King and all his kinsmen and many a noble knight :
These went each day to Chriemhild, to see the maiden bright.

His leave now would be taking Siegfried the hero good,
Doubtful he was of winning the prize he long had wooed.
The King heard of his purpose, how he would ride away :
It was the young Prince Geiselher persuaded him to stay.

" Whither, noble Siegfried, now whither would'st thou ride ?
To this my prayer give hearing, and with these knights abide
Here with good King Gunther, and those in his pay ;
Here too are fair dames many, who eye you lovingly."

Then spake the stalwart Siegfried : " So let the horses be ;
Away I fain had ridden, that shall be far from me ;
Hang up again the bucklers : my own land had I sought,
But from my purpose Geiselher has me with honour wrought."

So, through his friends' love, tarried still the warrior brave,
And in the wide world truly he nowhere else could have
Such joy as here befell him ; since so it came to be,
That with each day returning fair Chriemhild he did see.

For sake of her sweet beauty the Degen there did stay.

With many a pleasant pastime flew the hours away ;

Her love alone did rule him, and caused him oft sore need,

• Through this at length the warrior by cruel wrong lay dead.

SIXTH ADVENTURE.

Gunther goes to woo Brunhilda.

AND now again fresh tidings came from Over-Rhine :
'Twas said in a far country many fair maids were seen.
To win one of these maidens was now King Gunther's mood,
Which to his Lords and Recken seemed naught but good.

There was a King's daughter dwelling far o'er the main,
Whose like indeed will never be elsewhere seen again.
Fair was she without measure, her strength beyond compare,
For her love valiant Degen in fight must cope with her.

A mighty stone she hurled, sprang after with swift bound ;
He who her love would master must be of courage sound,
And thrice in combat vanquish the fair and noble maid ;
Were she but once the victor, so must he lose his head.

In such grim play already had the maid often won.
Far as the Rhine the rumour to a brave Knight had flown,
Who of this peerless maiden with longing heart did dream.
For this shall many a Degen lose both life and limb.

As once amid his courtiers the Monarch Gunther sate,
On all sides was the question mooted in debate,
What lady, for their master, as Queen would be most fit,
Whom he to wed was willing, and what country best would suit.

Outspake then the Rhine's Landlord : " I will o'er the sea,
Hence to the Lady Brunnhild, whate'er may chance to me.
For her sweet love's sake will I venture my very life,
Which I care not for saving if I win her not for wife."

" From that let me dissuade you," said the warrior Siegfried bold,
" At the Court of this King's daughter such usage grim doth hold,
Who for her love would venture a reckoning high must pay :
So should you well consider ere you speed on this way."

Then spake the Monarch Gunther : " Ne'er yet was there a maid
Fashioned so strong and sturdy that it shall e'er be said
But I her might will vanquish with my own hands, I trow."
" Vaunt not," replied Sir Siegfried ; " this lady you do not know.

" And were your strength four-fold, yet could you not succeed
Against her mighty prowess ; so let your will be stayed ;
In good faith I advise you, if you would shun your death,
Let not your longing bring you into such fruitless scathe."

" How strong soe'er she may be, journey forth will we
Hence to the fair Brunhilda, let what will chance to me ;
For sake of her sweet beauty the venture must be mine ;
Perchance God may so will it, that she come with me to the
Rhine."

" Then list to what I counsel," brake Sir Hagen in :
" Pray you the gallant Siegfried that he with you will join
In this far-distant journey : that is the best advice,
Since he of Lady Brunhild can tell you in such wise."

Quoth Gunther : " Noble Siegfried, will you my helper be
To win this beauteous lady ? Now grant me this, I pray ;
And win I for my own self this most lovely wife,
So will I for you venture honour and limb and life."

To whom then swiftly turning, Siegmund's son replied :
" Help you I will on promise of your sister for my bride,
The fair and lovely Chriemhild, that most peerless Queen ;
I crave no other guerdon for aught that I may win."

Quoth Gunther : " That I promise, Sir Siegfried, by this hand.
And if with fair Brunhilda I come hither to this land,
Then will I give you freely to wife my sister dear ;
So with the beauteous maiden you lifelong joy shall share."

Thus they their troth had plighted, the Ritter brave and high.
Befell them in the future heavier care thereby,
Ere they the lady homewards brought with them to the Rhine ;
Yet graver troubles shortly pursued these Knights so keen.

Now of wild Dwarfs, stories have I chanced to hear,
That they live in hollow mountains, and cloaks of some
sort wear,
Which are named Tarnkappen—they are of wondrous kind :
Who bears one on his body need trouble not his mind

For fear of thrusts or gashes ; nor any can him see,
So long as he does wear it ; yet can he hear and spy
As much as he be willing, and still be seen of none ;
Grown has his strength, too, greatly, so has the tale come down.

Such a weird Tarnkappe Siegfried had with him,
Which the mighty Degen had in combat grim
From the strong Dwarf taken, Alberich by name.
Girt them now for the journey these Knights of worthy fame.

When the sturdy Siegfried his Tarnkappe wore,
He gained by the strange contact of strength such mighty store,
As that of twelve men added to what himself supplied :
He won with greatest cunning this most noble bride.

He had moreover with him his hvel-Kappe good,
Therewith he could do truly, according to his mood,
Whatsoe'er he listed, and yet be seen by none.
'Twas thus he conquered Brunhild, much trouble he thereby won.

"Now tell me, noble Siegfried, ere we forth do fare,
How with greatest honour we may journey o'er the mere?
Shall we lead an army into Brunhilda's land?
Thirty thousand Degen—they shall be swift to hand." "

"Took we whatever number," brake Sir Siegfried in,
"Such cruel custom reigneth at the Court of this dread Queen,
That they must haply perish before her wrathful mood.
I will you better counsel, Sir Knight, so keen and good.

"In knightly fashion will we journey down the Rhine.
I will quickly tell you who with us shall join :
Four of us together will go down to the sea
To win this noble lady, whatever happen may.

"Myself for one I reckon, and you the next shall speed,
The third shall be Sir Hagen,—perchance we may succeed,—
And fourth shall be Sir Dankwart, that very noble Knight :
There shall not stand a thousand against us in the fight."

"Now would I learn right gladly," Gunther made reply,
"Ere we start on this journey—the thought fills me with joy,—
Apparelled in what fashion to Brunhild's Court we go,
As may the best beseem us : Sir Siegfried, let me know."

"The very best apparel which can be made by hand
Is seen in constant wearing in Brunhilda's land ;
Then let us noble raiment before these ladies wear,
That no shame there befall us, and we civil words may hear."

Then spake the Monarch Gunther : " I myself will go
Within to my dear mother, and beg it may be so,
That sewn shall be our raiment by many a fair maid's hand,
Thus shall we meet with honour in Brunhilda's land."

To whom with courtly bearing Sir Hagen then replied :
" Why with such toil to trouble your mother is there need ?
But let your noble sister know what we have in mind,
So shall we for this journey ample assistance find."

Gunther then prayed his sister that she would him see,
And also the Knight Siegfried. Or ever that could be,
Herself the maid adorned in raiment rich and rare ;
That the lords were coming was no great grief to her.

In brilliant dress apparelled her maidens too did show.
Then entered the two Princes, the which she scarce did know ;
Then from her seat uprising, with maiden coyness sweet
She did the noble stranger and her brother greet.

" Welcome are you, dear brother, and your comrade too.
Now would I," said the maiden, " gladly hear from you,
What is your lordly pleasure that you have come to me :
I pray you, let me know it, if I can of service be."

Then spake the Monarch Gunther : " Sister, that shall be so,
We must in this great caution with high courage show :
To ride we will awooing, far in a foreign land,
And on our journey would have noble raiment at command."

" Now sit thee, dear brother," said the fair Princess,
" And let me first have knowledge who the lady is,
Whom to wed you purpose in some strange king's land."
The two friends so chosen took she by the hand,

And with the twain she entered, where she sate her down
Upon a silken cushion, that is to me well known,
All worked with richest pattern, with gold embroidered o'er ;
Well might their hearts be merry in such fair lady's bower.

Soft and friendly glances and tender looks, I trow,
Between the pair so loving passed swiftly to and fro.
In his deep heart he bore her ; she was to him as his life :
Soon was the lovely Chriemhild noble Siegfried's wife.

Then spake the wealthy Monarch : " Dear sister mine,
Without your aid to help us the prize we cannot win ;
In truth we would adventure into Brunhilda's land,
And so before those ladies have fair raiment at command."

To him replied the maiden : " Brother mine, so dear,
If in aught I can help you to your purpose here,
So shall it soon be proven that to do so I am glad,
Were others to misserve you, so were Chriemhilda sad.

" You, most noble Ritter, shall not seek this with care,
Enjoin it of me shall you with free and lordly air ;
Whate'er you may command me, that shall not be delayed,
And with goodwill I'll do it," said the lovely maid.

" Fain would we, dear sister, costly raiment wear,
And thereto well may help us your gentle hand so fair.
Set your maidens working that so we may succeed,
And no one from this journey attempt us to dissuade."

Then answered him the maiden : " Now mark these words of mine :
Of silk we have sufficient ; bid then that jewels fine
Upon a shield be brought here, the dress we'll so prepare."
Thereto did King Gunther and Siegfried give quick ear.

"Who are the chosen comrades," spake the Queen again,
"Who, thus gay apparelled, shall journey in your train?"
"Four of us," answered Gunther, "of my kinsmen two,
Dankwart and Hagen, to this Court with us shall go.

"Now pray you well consider, fair sister, what I say :
See that we four Recken have by an early day,
Each one three sets of raiment, good linen too at hand,
That without shame we journey into Brunhilda's land."

Then took their leave the Princes with kind and courteous mien,
Now quickly to her maidens called the lovely Queen ;
Thirty damsels chose she from her circle fair,
Who for such skilled working showed a talent rare.

On silks from far Arabia, of soft and snowy sheen,
And priceless Zazamanker, all as the clover green,
The jewels they embroidered : that gave a mantle bright ;
The Lady Chriemhild shaped it with her own hand so white.

The skins of foreign fishes they used with quaint device,
Such as in that country were strange to people's eyes,
The which with silk they covered, as fitting was to be :
Now listen to great wonders of this apparel gay.

From kingdom of Morocco, and eke from Libya,
Of silks the very rarest that any one e'er saw
In courts of mighty Princes, of these they had to spare ;
Well showed the Lady Chriemhild how she had them in care.

Since they for this journey such costly robes required,
Skins of ermine chose she, such as were most desired,
Those where 'mid coal-black softness many a white spot lay.
Such were by gallant Recken worn at feastings gay.

Many a precious jewel glanced from Arabian gold ;
Scant leisure had the ladies, that must in truth be told,
Within the seventh week their work all finished lay ;
His weapons well re-burnished each noble Recke gay.

By this, when they were ready, there lay on the Rhine-stream,
With all good care preparèd, a small craft, stout of beam,
The which should safely bear them downwards to the sea :
Well might the noble maidens with much toil weary be.

'Twas told then to the Recken that all ready lay
They needed for their journey ; their raiment rich and gay,
All that they had wished for, completed was to hand ;
No longer would they tarry on the Rhenish strand.

Now to the knights companions a messenger did hie,
To know if they were willing their garments new to see,
Whether for the heroes too short or long they were ;
Right truly were they fitted : they thanked the ladies fair.

Whoe'er they might encounter he must confess, I ween,
That on this earth he never fairer robes had seen.
So at Brunhilda's Court they now might bear them well ;
Of perfect knight's equipment could no one further tell.

Well might the lovely Chriemhild great store of thanks receive.
Then did the gallant Recken pray for departure leave ;
With high knightly breeding their request was made.
Then with tears and weeping were her bright eyes sad.

She said : " Beloved brother, 'twere better tarry here
And wed some other lady, that seems to me most clear ;
Whereby you need not venture your person nor your life,
So far you need not travel to find a high-born wife."

How keen her sorrow pierced her heart soon public made,
In sooth they all were weeping whatever word was said.
The gold upon their breasts their tears did sadly stain,
Which from their eyes so lovely did gently downwards rain.

Then said she : " Noble Siegfried, to your care I assign,
In love and knightly keeping, this dear brother mine
So that no harm befall him in Brunhilda's land."
That did the hero promise Chriemhilda by his hand.

Then spake the stalwart Degen : " While life remains to me,
On his account, fair Lady, you may be sorrow free.
Him will I bring you safely to the Rhine-beach again ;
In that you may trust surely." Thanked him the maiden then.

Then to the strand were carried their gold-red shields so light,
And to the boat was taken their glittering armour bright ;
Nor were their steeds forgotten : fain would they part from there.
Was seen then a great weeping amongst the ladies fair.

Many a lovely maiden from the casement gazed ;
Their barque with sails full swelling a mighty wind has seized.
The haughty knights companions upon the Rhine-stream lay ;
Then spake the Monarch Gunther : " Who shall our pilot be ? "

" That will I," quoth Siegfried ; " I can across the flood
Steer you from hence right yarely, so trust me, heroes good ;
Our proper course for sailing is well known to me."
So from Burgundian country they parted merrily.

Quickly had Sir Siegfried grasped a sturdy oar,
With all his strength their vessel he pushed from off the shore ;
And eke the gallant Gunther his oar well-handled too.
So from the land departed the knightly comrades true.

Dainty fare they carried and thereto goodly wine,
The very best that could be found upon the Rhine.
Their horses were well cared for ; of rest they had enow.
Their barque sailed well and smoothly, small trouble did they
know.

The trusty sailing tackle bore well the steady strain ;
Or e'er the sun had left them they twenty miles did gain,
With a good wind ever downwards towards the sea :
After their restless labour the fair maids weary lay.

Upon the twelfth day morning, so does our story run,
Had the wind propitious borne them swiftly on
To Isenstein's strong fortress, in Brunhilda's land.
'Twas known but to Sir Siegfried, to none other in the band.

When now the Monarch Gunther so many towers did see,
And such far-spread enclosures, quickly outspake he :
" Now tell me, good friend Siegfried, if it to you is known ;
Who does all these castles and this fair country own ?

" In all my lifetime have I, that must I fain allow,
So many strong-built towers never seen till now,
In any other country such as here we scan ;
He who of all was founder was well a mighty man."

Answered him Sir Siegfried : " That is to me well known ;
The land and all the castles, they are Brunhilda's own,
And Isenstein the fortress, believe me well you may :
Many a lovely maiden shall you see there to-day.

" You heroes will I counsel : Be all of single mood,
And let your speech well tally, so seems it to me good ;
When we this day together before Brunhild appear,
To this King's daughter must we behave with every care.

"When we the lovely maiden amid her people see,
You shall, most noble heroes, let this the story be :
King Gunther is my master, and I his vassal here ;
So shall his heartfelt longing come more swiftly near."

The knights were all compliant to do as he did say,
No one so haughty was there that would him disobey,
They spoke as he did wish them ; great was their joy therein,
That their Monarch Gunther should see Brunhild the Queen.

"Not for thy sake so freely will I this service do,
As for thy sister Chriemhild, the lovely maiden true :
She is to me aye dearer than my soul and life ;
I reck not much of trouble so I win her for wife."

SEVENTH ADVENTURE.

How Gunther won Brunhilda.

MEANTIME their little barque upon the swelling flood
Beneath the fortress floated : then saw the Monarch good,
Above him at the casements, many a lovely maid ;
That they to him were strangers made him in truth right sad.

He asked then of Siegfried, his companion there :
“ Have you any knowledge of these maidens fair,
Who gaze thus down upon us as on the flood we lie ?
Whate’er their sovereign’s title they are of bearing high.”

Then spake the warrior Siegfried ; “ Eye closely shall you now
These maidens here above us, and shall me then avow,
Which should your chosen bride be, if you the choice might have.”
“ That will I,” answered Gunther, the Knight so keen and brave.

“ I see a lovely maiden in yon casement there,
All clad in snow-white raiment, she is of beauty rare :
My eyes upon her linger, her form is fair to see ;
If I to choose might venture she should be wife to me.”

“ Right well have you chosen with glance of true insight ;
That is the noble Brunhild, the peerless maiden bright,
For her your heart is longing, your deepest sense and mood.”
Her bearing to King Gunther seemed naught but good.

Then ordered the King's daughter her noble maids away
From the Castle casements ; they should no longer stay
In vision of the strangers ; obeyed her every one.
What then the maidens purposed that is to us well known.

They robed themselves right bravely the strangers to receive,
As in all times a custom lovely ladies have ;
Then to the shuttered casements they returned again
Where they could see the heroes—so curious were they then.

They were but four in number who came into the land,
Siegfried, the brave Degen, a steed led on the Strand,
That saw through the casements all the ladies there :
Honour great to Gunther seemed he thus to bear.

He held him by the bridle, the steed of noble birth,
Gentle he was and shapely, strong and of mighty girth,
Till the Monarch Gunther firm in the saddle sate.
Such service did him Siegfried which later he did forget.

Then from the barque he also led his own charger down ;
Such service had he truly before but seldom shown,
That he at hero's stirrup should be standing there.
All this through the casements saw these ladies fair.

After the same fashion were both the Degen clad,
Snow-white was their raiment and so too was each steed ;
The one was as the other, their shields so fair to view,
That a radiant lustre on the knights' hands they threw.

They rode with gallant bearing before Brunhilda's Hall,
Their saddles thickly jewelled, their horses' chest-straps small ;
Wherefrom were seen suspended bells of bright gold red :
So came they to the land as their high courage bade.

With spears all brightly polished, with swords of temper rare,
Which on each bold warrior reached downwards to the spur ;
The sturdy Recken wore these broad enough and keen :
All this saw Brunhilda, the very noble Queen.

With them rode also Dankwart and eke Hagen the Knight :
Clad were these two Ritter, if we have heard aright,
In robes all richly wroughten and of raven hue ;
Mighty were their bucklers, strong and broad and new.

From India's far country came their jewels fine,
Which on their mantles glittered with soft and lambent shine.
They left their barque unguarded at anchor on the flood,
Then rode they to the fortress, these heroes brave and good.

Six and eighty Towers counted they in all,
Three Palaces right spacious and one noble Hall
Built throughout of Marble, all like the grass so green ;
Within, with her attendants, sat Brunhild the Queen.

The Castle gates unbarred now wide open lay ;
Quickly ran to meet them, those in Brunhild's pay,
To give the guests meet welcome to their Lady's land,
Their horses they took from them, and their shields from hand.

Then spake one of the servants, " Your swords give here, I pray,
And your coats of armour." " In sooth that likes not me,"
Quoth Von Troneg Hagen, " ourselves will carry them."
Then of the country's usage 'gan Siegfried tell to him.

" In this fort 'tis the custom, as you now may hear,
That the guests shall never any weapons bear :
Let them from hence be carried, that is the wisest plan."
Against his will then yielded Hagen, King Gunther's man.

They gave their guests good quarters, and also fitting rest.
Many stalwart Recken, in princely raiment dressed,
About the Court were stirring as to and fro they went :
Yet after our brave heroes were many glances sent.

By this had Lady Brunhild the tidings too received,
That these knightly strangers had in her realm arrived,
Clad in such royal vestment, across the swelling flood :
Then 'gan she to make question the maiden fair and good.

"I pray thee," said the Princess, "let some one tell to me,
Who the foreign Recken yonder may chance to be,
Whom I behold there standing, of such lordly aspect grand,
And for whose sake the heroes have journeyed to this land."

Said one of her attendants : "Lady, I must allow,
That these knights have never crossed my eyes till now ;
Yet one there is amongst them who well may Siegfried be :
Him should you fairly welcome if you are advised by me.

"The next of these companions, right fair he is to view ;
Had he his state attending, he as a King would show
O'er wide and princely countries, such might he well command.
One sees him there so nobly amongst the others stand.

"The third of these companions, he is of aspect stern,
And yet of manly beauty, rich Queen, ye might discern,
From those his rapid glances, for the eyes nought rest in him,
Methinks this foreign Recke is of temper fierce and grim.

"The youngest of these strangers, he is of beauty bright,
In his noble bearing one sees the princely Knight,
Well versed in gallant usage and of honour clear :
In sooth we all might rue it, if aught ill befell him here.

" Though his aspect so friendly, and his robe so gay,
Many a wife with weeping might bewail the day
If he with wrath were roused ; so stout his form is seen,
He is in all true daring a Ritter bold and keen."

Then spake the fair King's daughter : " Bring here my robe to
me,

And if the mighty Siegfried himself it chance to be
Come hither for my wooing, let him himself take heed :
I fear him not so greatly, that I with him shall wed."

In rich and chosen raiment the Queen herself arrayed,
And by her side went trooping many a lovely maid ;
More than a hundred were there, clad in raiment bright ;
Such wondrous store of beauty came to the strangers' sight.

With them followed closely Degen from Isenland,
These were Brunhilda's Recken, each with his sword in hand,
Five hundred strong or over : this irked the guests to see.
Uprose the gallant heroes, firmly prepared were they.

When now the fair King's daughter saw Siegfried standing there,
Her guest she quickly greeted with high and courtly air :
" Welcome you are, Sir Siegfried, here to this my land.
What means your journey hither, now let me understand."

Quoth Siegfried : " Lady Brunhild, great thanks to you I owe,
That you, most gentle Princess, should deign to greet me so,
Before this noble Recke who stands beside me here ;
For he is my Master." Thus did the Knight forbear.

" He is of Rhineland Monarch, what more needs there to say !
It is for your sake only that we are here to-day.
For your love will he woo you, what fate so'er he earn :
In good time now bethink you ; my Lord is hard to turn.

"He is by name Gunther, a mighty King and dread ;
If he your love can conquer, his fondest wish has sped.
With him have I journeyed into your domain ;
Were he not my Master, I should not long remain."

She said : "Is he your master, and are you in his pay ?
Can he, myself the chooser, encounter me at play,
And prove therein the victor, so will I be his wife ;
But if I once am winner, ye shall none escape with life."

Then spake Von Troneg Hagen : "Show us then, Lady Queen,
What play is this ye speak of. Ere will let you win
My lord and master Gunther there'll be the devil to pay ;
For such a lovely maiden a man well venture may."

"The stone shall he throw with me, spring after it in air,
Then with me try a spear cast ; be not o'er hasty here.
In this your life and honour may soon low be laid :
Bethink ye well now of it," said the lovely maid.

Siegfried, the swift Degen, drew near to the King,
And bade him with the maiden show no wavering,
But speak his wish out freely ; right fearless he should be :
"By my art will I save you from her power this day."

Then spake the Monarch Gunther : "Great and noble Queen ;
Fix as you will the trial, and were it still more keen,
I would it glad encounter for your sweet beauty's sake :
For my bride will I win you, my head thereon I'll stake."

When now of his decision the Queen was thus aware,
She bade, as well became her, the lists at once prepare ;
And for the fight gave order her raiment they should bring,
A coat of mail all golden, and a stout buckler ring.

In silken shirt of armour robed herself the maid,
Such that ne'er in battle it could be pierced by blade,
Cunningly prepared with cloth from Libya ;
Lightly woven laces glanced on its border fair.

Meantime her haughty carriage the guests took ill to heart,
Dankwart and Hagen stood gloomily apart ;
How it might fare with Gunther troubled them full sore ;
They thought ! " Small good doth bode us our journey to this
shore."

Meanwhile had also Siegfried, the bold and wary knight,
Gone where their barque was lying, unnoticed from their sight,
Therein he the Tarnkappe found where concealed it lay,
Quickly he threw it o'er him : no one him then could see.

Back again he hastened, many a knight was there ;
For the grim encounter the Queen had bid prepare.
Softly he went amongst them, yet was he seen by none
Of all who there were present ; right deftly was it done.

A circle wide was chosen where the contest should be,
Before the stalwart Recken, who the fight should see.
More than seven hundred Degen, who all their arms did bear :
Whoe'er should be the victor they should with truth declare.

By this was Brunhild ready, armed was she in sooth,
As if for Gunther's kingdom to fight she were not loath :
Upon her silken breastplate was many a bar of gold,
O'er which her rosy colour shone beauteous to behold.

Appeared now her attendants, bearing to the field,
Of ruddy gold all wroughten, a stout and mighty shield,
With clasps of steel well-tempered, of massive strength were they,
The which the lovely maiden should handle in the fray.

A rich and noble border around the shield was made,
On this precious jewels green as grass were laid ;
These 'mid the gold encircling sparkled with dazzling shine.
A brave heart well he needed who would this maiden win.

Without the boss the buckler was, so it has been said,
Full three spans in thickness ; this bore the sturdy maid.
In steel and gold enchasing it was rich enow,
Four of her servants hardly could carry it, I trow.

When the Degen Hagen saw the shield appear,
In angry mood exclaimed the knight of Troneg there :
"How now then, noble Gunther, small chance is here of life !
She whom you came a-wooing is well the Devil's wife."

Priceless was the raiment which adorned the maid ;
Of silk from Azagoger she a corslet had
Of rich and noble fashion ; many a precious stone
Upon the lovely Princess with clear lustre shone.

Then brought they for the lady a keenly-pointed spear
Of massive weight and thickness, which she was wont to bear,
Strong and unyielding was it, mighty and broad withal,
At its point two edges it had of sharpest steel

Now of its weight so ponderous you may hear wonders said—
Three and a half bars iron in cunning welding laid.
Hardly they could it carry three of Brunhilda's men ;
The noble Degen Gunther to sorrow was full fain.

Within himself he pondered : Whereto shall all this lead ?
Were it the Fiend in person how could he here succeed ?
If I were only safely in Burgundy again !
A bride I surely seldom could with more trouble win.

For his grief and trouble he had; God wot, good cause.
All his camping baggage they brought him where he was :
Soon stood the wealthy Monarch in his armour there ;
Almost was Sir Hagen beside himself with care.

Then spake Hagen's brother, the bold knight Dankwart :
" By my soul deeply rue I this journey for my part.
We, who were aye true Recken ! how has our courage shamed !
Shall we then in this country fall by a woman's hand ?

" Vexed am I full sorely that I came to this shore ;
If my brother Hagen but his weapons bore,
And had I but mine also, so might they have a care,
These Recken of Brunhilda's, for all their haughty air.

" They should be taught discretion, of that be well assured ;
Though with a thousand oaths for peace I'd pledged my word,
Before I would see perish my well-loved lord so dear,
Her own life too should forfeit this lovely maiden fair."

" We might well unmolested roam this country through,"
Said his brother Hagen, " had we our armour true,
Which we in fight have need of, and eke our weapons good,
Then should this lovely maiden give o'er her haughty mood."

Well did the sturdy damsel hear what he did say ;
With merry glance and scornful the Knight askant eyed she.
" Since then he is so doughty, bring him his armour here,
And give their trusty weapons to the Dogen there.

" It recks me just as little whether in arms arrayed,
Or if unarmed they stand there," quoth the royal maid.
" I fear the strength of no one whom I have ever met ;
In combat with your Monarch I chance may conquer yet."

When now their swords they had gotten, as the maid had said,
Dankwart, the noble Recke, with joy flushed rosy red.

"Now play whate'er you will," so spake the worthy Thane,
"Gunther is yet unvanquished, we have our swords again."

The Lady Brunhild's prowess showed itself not alight ;
Into the circle brought they a stone of cumbrous weight,
Of bulk Unhewn and mighty, massive and round and broad,
Twelve of her knights could hardly bear it o'er the sward.

This threw she where she listed, as with the spear also,
At this did the Burgundians grievous trouble know.
"Whom would the King then marry," aloud Sir Hagen cried,
"She might in sooth full well be the Devil's bride."

Her arm, so white and lovely, with upturned sleeve she bared,
And with her hand to fasten the buckler swift prepared ;
Her spear on high she poised, forth stood she to assail—
Before her scornful anger the stranger knights did quail.

And were it not that Siegfried came swiftly to his aid,
Soon would the Monarch Gunther to her his life have paid ;
Gently he drew anear him and touched him on his hand ;
In grievous plight and trouble the Monarch there did stand.

"What was it that touched me?" thought the Degen keen,
And as he glanced around him nought was there to be seen,
But a voice spake : "'Tis I, Siegfried, your comrade here ;
Before yon Queen so haughty you shall quit you without fear.

"Your shield now give me quickly, its handling leave to me.
Be wary now in heeding whate'er you hear me say ;
Stand firm, and act the gestures, the brunt will I withstand."
As Siegfried thus addressed him much cheer the Monarch gained

"Tell no one of this service, let it be hid for aye ;
So shall the fair King's daughter have small renown this day
Over your life so precious, which she fain would win,
But see now how so fearless before you stands the Queen !"

Then hurled, with force terrific, her spear the noble maid
Full on the mighty buckler, broad and rich inlaid,
Which on his left opposed the child of Siegelind :
From the steel sprang the fire as though 'twere winged with
wind.

The keen blade of the weapon pierced the shield thro' and thro',
So that the fierce sparks blazing from coat of mail outflew.
Beneath the shock so dreadful tottered the Degen keen—
Wer't not for the Tarnkappe they both slain had been.

From the mouth of Siegfried swift out-gushed the blood.
Himself he soon recovered, then grasped the Degen good
The spear which through his buckler she cast with might and
main :

Soon did the sturdy Siegfried send it her back again.

He thought : " I will not slay her, the lovely maiden fair."
The steely blade, so cruel, he held behind him there ;
With the blunt spear-stock hurled he upon her armour strong,
And with a force so mighty that loud the shock outrung.

The fire flashed from her cuirass, as were the dart wind-blown ;
Swiftly had he hurled it, stout King Siegmund's son.
Not e'en to her was given before such force to stand :
Such had indeed ne'er chanced from King Gunther's hand.

Brunhild, the lovely maiden, sprang quickly to her feet :
" Noble Ritter Gunther, my thanks to you are great !"
Well thought she he had conquered by his own strength alone ;
No, 'twas a knight far stronger who had her thus undone.

HOW GUNTHER WON BRUNHILDA.

With hasty steps she turnèd, angry was her mood,
The weighty stone she lifted, the noble maiden good ;
With wondrous force she threw it, far after it she sprang
In its swift flight to reach it, while loud her armour rang.

From the place of starting twelve fathoms flew the stone,
With mighty spring the maiden reached it ere 'twas down ;
Thither went swift Siegfried where the stone now lay,
To poise it Gunther feignèd, not his the strength that day.

A daring man was Siegfried, strong and of stature rare,
The stone he threw still farther, still farther sprang in air ;
From his mystic garment such mighty strength he won,
That in his spring he carried Gunther with him along.

This feat too was accomplished ; before them lay the stone,
Gunther it was, the Degen, whom they saw there alone.
Brunhild, the lovely maiden, flushed red with anger high :
Well had Siegfried rescued the King from death so nigh.

Then to her knights and courtiers the Princess spake aloud,
As she the heroes noted amid the circling crowd :
“ My friends and faithful liegemen, come quickly here to me ;
You shall to this King Gunther in all things subject be.”

Then did Brunhilda's Recken lay their weapons by ;
And before King Gunther, Monarch of Burgundy,
Inclined himself full lowly many a Degen keen :
All thought that he the Victor by his own might had been.

Right lovingly he kissed her—what bliss for him was there ;
Her hand she freely gave him, the peerless maiden fair ;
She made him ruler also over all her land.
Much joyed they at this ending the knights so keen of hand.

She begged the noble Ritter that they would go with her
To the Hall so spacious. When they were seated there
Ample honours did they to the Recken pay :
Dankwart and Hagen took it all quietly.

Meanwhile had swift Siegfried borne with wary care
Back to their anchored vessel the mystic Tarnkappe ;
Then to the Hall repairing, where many a fair dame sate,
With other Degen mingling his cares he did forget.

" Why tarry ye, my masters ? Why begin ye not the play ?
Does then the fair King's daughter show you such courtesy ?
Let us now see clearly how shall end the fight."
Thus, as of all unconscious, spake the crafty Knight.

To whom the lovely maiden : " By what chance has it been
That our contest, Sir Siegfried, was by you unseen,
Wherein remained the Victor kingly Gunther's hand ?"
An answer gave her Hagen, Knight of Burgundland.

He said : " Then had you, Lady, troubled us sore in mood,
And to our barque had parted Siegfried the Degen good,
When the Monarch Gunther engaged with you in fight,
Therefore he knows nought of it," so spake the wary Knight.

" Now joy I for these tidings," said Siegfried the bold,
" That your too haughty valour should thus be overruled,
And that some man is living who will your master be.
Now shall you, noble Lady, to the Rhine with us away."

To him replied the maiden : " That may not yet be so ;
First must I my kinsmen and my knights let know.
So lightly can I hardly this my kingdom leave ;
My friends so true and loving, I will first here receive."

Then bade she that her heralds should haste on every side,
To beg her friends and liegemen that they would quickly ride
To Isenstein, her fortress, they should not fail therein ;
To every one she proffered robes of richest sheen.

Then saw one daily riding from early morn till night
From Brunhilda's castles many a stalwart knight.
"How now, then," quoth Hagen, "what sort of game is here ?
These friends of fair Brunhild bode us small good, I fear.

"When they, with all their power, have compassed us about,
What the Queen may purpose, of that we well may doubt :
What if her anger kindle, then were we lost indeed,
So might the noble maiden put us in sore need."

Replied the sturdy Siegfried : "That will I circumvent,
What troubles you so sorely I can well prevent :
The help you need soon will I bring you to this strand,
Brave and chosen Recken, yet of a foreign land.

"For me let no one question, I will from hence away ;
Meanwhile, in true honour, may God keep you aye.
Soon shall I be returning—with me a thousand men,
The very best of Degen that e'er came to my ken."

"Stay not too long in absence," the Monarch spake him so,
"Your aid to us how precious we have good cause to know."
Quoth Siegfried : "You shall see me in a few days again ;
That you have sent me somewhere, so shall you tell the Queen."

EIGHTH ADVENTURE.

Siegfried goes to the Nibelungen Land.

THEN strode the trusty Siegfried in his Tarnkappe
Downward to the landing where their barque lay near ;
Therein, unseen, stood quickly the child of Siegelind,
Away the boat 'gan drifting, as though driven by the wind.

One saw nor crew nor pilot, yet swift the vessel flew,
Such was the might of Siegfried, and such the art he knew. .
'Twas thought the barque was carried by a strong wind away :
No ! Siegfried was the steersman, the stalwart hero gay.

All that day long he sailèd, and ere was spent the night
He came to a far country of great and wondrous might,
Of stages long, a hundred, or thereto even more :
'Twas the land of the Nibelungen, where he won the golden store.

Alone still steered the hero towards an inlet broad,
His skiff he moored securely, the Knight so well prepared.
Soon came he to a mountain whereon a castle stood ;
As for a wayworn traveller he sought for bed and food.

He came now to the portal and found it all secure :
A watch they kept right wary, such was the custom sure.
Upon the gate he battered, the reckless stranger bold ;
Closely was it guarded : a parley then did hold

A grim and surly porter, who there sentry stood,
Around for service handy lay his weapons strewed.
Quoth he : " Who knocks so hotly without there on the gate ? "
To whom the Degen Siegfried with accent counterfeit

Replied : " I am a Recke, now haste the door undo,
Or else full many Degen your insolence shall rue,
Who now in easy slumber in their beds are laid."
Wrathful was the porter when Siegfried thus had said.

By this the wary giant had donned his armour bright,
And eke his trusty helmet, great was his strength and might,
His buckler high he lifted, then wide the portal threw,
How grimly there he countered Siegfried the Degen true !

" Who's this that dares disquiet so many a sleeping knight ? "
Nor longer did he parley but pressed him to the fight.
Siegfried had need to parry the blows as best he may ;
Beneath the giant's prowess his buckler clasp gave way,

Struck by a bar of iron. Sore was the hero's need,
Almost he thought to reckon himself amongst the dead,
As with such strength the porter so fierce did him assail.
Much thanks did Siegfried give him for his trusty zeal.

So furious was the contest that loud the castle rung ;
The sound of blows e'en pierced the Hall of the Nibelung.
He seized at length the porter and bound him foot and hand.
The news of it spread quickly throughout the Niblung's land.

The tidings soon were carried along the mountain height
To Alberich the Dwarf, that wild unruly knight,
In haste he donned his armour and ran there where he found
The noble stranger standing and giant porter bound.

Alberich was grim of humour, of strength he had to spare ;
A coat of mail and helmet for armour he did wear,
A golden mace and weighty in his hand he held ;
Thus ran he quickly thither where Siegfried he beheld.

Seven massive bosses from his mace did hang,
These from his left so fiercely on Siegfried's buckler rang,
And with such sudden fury that forth the splinters flew,
Thereat the noble stranger his life in peril knew.

His broken shield he quickly threw from him on the sward,
And thrust into its scabbard his long and trusty sword :
No wish had he to slay his faithful sentinel ;
Thus cared he for his people, as became him well.

Upon the Dwarf Alberich with mighty hands he ran,
And by his beard seized the old and grisly man.
So lustily he pulled it that he with pain did roar—
Such treatment by the hero troubled the Dwarf full sore.

Loud cried the sturdy Degen : " Now spare my life, I pray,
Wer't not that I already a hero do obey,
To whom perforce I swore that I would subject be,
To the death I'd serve you," so spake he craftily.

Natheless the hero bound him as the giant he had done ;
Siegfried's strength so mighty with sorrow he must own.
The Dwarf began to question by what name men him knew ?
He said : " My name is Siegfried ; I thought I was known to you."

Exclaimed then the Dwarf Alberich : " O tidings strange and rare !
Now am I fully conscious by this your prowess here,
That you in sooth are worthy Lord of this land to be ;
I'll do whate'er you bid me, but spare my life to me."

Then spake the Degen Siegfried : " Now hasten with all speed,
And bring me of your best knights the number that I need,
A thousand Nibelungen, fain would I see them here ;
To your life no peril from me you then need fear."

Then loosed he the Dwarf Alberich, and the giant he had bound ;
Swiftly the Dwarf ran thither, where he the Recken found.
From sleep he roused them quickly, those in the Niblung's pay :
" Up, up," he cried, " ye heroes, ye shall to Siegfried away."

From their beds they started, each used his utmost speed,
A thousand stalwart Recken, soon stood they well arrayed.
They went where they found Siegfried, as the hero did request ;
Warmly the knights he greeted ; many a hand was pressed.

Many a torch was blazing ; the best of wine had they ;
That they had come so quickly he thanked them heartily.
He said : " Now shall you with me over the rolling flood."
To go they all were willing, the knights so brave and good.

By this three thousand Recken had come together there :
From out their ranks a thousand of the best he chose with care.
For these they brought their helmets and all their armour bright,
That to Brunhilda's country journey with him they might.

Quoth Siegfried : " Noble Ritter, a word I have to say :
To this Court shall ye carry your richest clothing gay,
For we shall there be seen by many a lovely maid ;
Therefore let each adorn him and go gallantly arrayed."

Now might some fools haply charge me with falsity :
" How could so many Ritter living together be ?
Their food where could they foray ? their raiment where obtain ?
Were he Lord of thirty countries it could not so have been."

What wealth belonged to Siegfried is well known to you,
His was the Niblung's Treasure, and eke the country too :
To his knights he therefore gave ample guerdon good ;
The Hoard grew never smaller, let one take what one would.

They began their voyage early in the day ;
Hoi ! what stalwart comrades with Siegfried sailed away !
They took good horses with them, richly caparisoned ;
Soon they arrived in safety in Brunhilda's land.

On the walls were standing many a maiden fair.
Then said the Lady Brunhild : " Knows any who these are
Whom I see floating yonder so far o'er the sea ?
Their sails are of rare beauty, whiter than snow are they."

To her replied King Gunther : " My followers are these,
Whom on my voyage hither I left behind me on the seas ;
I sent for them hither : now, Lady, they are here."
The Guest so high and noble was attended with much care.

Then at his vessel's prow in princely raiment dight
Was seen standing Siegfried, around him many a knight ;
Outspake the royal maiden : " Sir King, now counsel me :
Shall I as guests these weloome, or with cold courtesy ?"

" Right fairly shall you meet them before your Palace gate,
As though woll pleased to see them, let them not doubt of that."
As the Monarch bade her so did the haughty Queen ;
Yet in her greeting glanced she at Siegfried with altered mien.

Good quarters soon were found them, the best they had at hand.
So many strangers were there arriving in the land,
That with the troops together on all sides pressed they lay,
Fain would the gallant Recken to Burgundy away.

Then spake the fair King's daughter: "My thanks I pledge fourfold
To him who will apportion my silver and my gold,
Of which I have such plenty, amongst these strangers here."
To whom replied Dankwart, Knight to Prince Geiselher :

"Fair and gracious Lady, that office leave to me ;
Your treasure will I portion," quoth the Knight of Burgundy ;
"If I should win dishonour let it be mine alone."
Noble was his bearing, that was clearly shown.

When now Hagen's brother the gold had at command,
Such rich and plenteous presents flowed from the hero's hand,
Who but a mark was asking received such ample store,
That the poor guests in gladness might live for evermore.

Golden coin in plenty he gave to all around :
Then in the Palace many in rich array were found,
Who in their lives had never in such gay robes been clad.
Told 'twas to Brunhilda ; thereat she grew right sad.

Then spake the fair King's daughter : "Well were it, Sire, for me,
That of all this my treasure some portion saved should be
From this your Squire's bestowing ; he squanders all my gold.
If any one would stay him my thanks were freely told.

"He gives such costly presents ; the Knight may well believe
That I to death had vowed me ; good sooth I yet would live :
And this my father's treasure my portion should have been."
Such a noble Purser ne'er before had Queen.

Then spake Von Troneg Hagen : "Lady, rest content,
The Monarch of the Rhineland has gold and fair raiment
In such astounding plenty, and has wealth so great,
He needs not hence to carry aught of Brunhilda's state."

"Not so, an' if you love me," the Queen made reply,
"Travelling chests full twenty let them charge for me
With gold and silken raiment, that I have gifts in hand
When we do journey yonder into Burgundian land."

They filled the boxes for her with gold and jewels rare ;
The lady's own retainers must to the work repair ;
She would not trust the office to Dankwart again.
Gunther and Hagen began to laugh amain.

Then spake the lovely maiden : " Whom leave we o'er this land ?
That shall be first determined by our joint command."
Replied the Monarch Gunther : " Choose whom you will for me,
The one you think most fitting, let him your steward be."

Of her nearest kinsfolk one was standing by,
He was her mother's brother, to him she did apply :
" Have now in your keeping my castles and my land,
Till through his own people Gunther shall take command."

Then from her servants chose she two thousand trusty men,
Who with her should journey to Burgundy's domain,
These with the thousand Ritter from Nibelungen land
Equipped them now for travel ; one saw them gather on the
strand.

Six and eighty ladies she took with her that day,
Withal a hundred maidens, fair they were to see.
No longer did they tarry, they were in haste to go :
Ere they should be returning many had cause for woe !

With sweet and modest bearing the maiden left her land,
She kissed her nearest kinsfolk who stood by her on the strand.
Many a kind wish followed as she left the shore ;
To her father's country returned the maid no more.

Upon the voyage had they enough of mirth and glee,
Nor was there aught wanting of feast and revelry.
Even the wind was friendly, and sped them swiftly on ;
The shore they left behind them—this rued many a mother's son.

And yet upon the voyage the King she would not wed,
The marriage feast must tarry till to his home they'd sped
At Worms, within his frontier, there to a pageant gay,
With all knights and maidens she came right merrily.

NINTH ADVENTURE.

Siegfried rides forward to Worms.

Now when upon their voyage they came to the ninth day,
Outspake Von Troneg Hagen : " Mark well what I do say ;
Our tidings reach too slowly to Worms upon the Rhine ;
By this should our Envoys in Burgundy have been."

Then spake the Monarch Gunther : " In sooth, and that's well
said ;

And truly on this errand none could swifter speed
Than yourself, friend Hagen, so ride ye forward well ;
The news of this our journey no one could better tell."

An answer gave him Hagen : " I am no Envoy good ;
Let me here mind my office ; tarry upon the flood
Will I with these fair ladies, and be at their command
Until we bring them safely into Burgundian land.

" Nay, rather let Sir Siegfried go on this embassy,
He will fulfil it, trust me, with knightly courtesy.
Would he now undertake it, with good grace can you send
Many a loving message to your sister by his hand."

They sent then for the hero : quickly he came there.

" Sir Knight," quoth kingly Gunther, " our country we draw
near ;

'Twere well that we sent tidings to the dear sister mine,
And also to my mother, that we come soon to the Rhine.

"And now to you I turn me, Siegfried, in this need,"
So spake the worthy Degen, "warm thanks shall be your meed."
But Siegfried stood reluctant, the noble-hearted man,
Until the Monarch Gunther to urge him sore began.

"Not for my sake only," he said, "you now shall ride,
But also for Chriemhilda, the fair and lovely maid,
So shall you speed in wooing this maid of high degree."
When Siegfried heard that saying ready right soon was he.

"Send tidings as you will then, swiftly the news I'll bear ;
And willingly I'll serve you for the maiden fair,
She whom at heart I cherish, can I forget her eye ?
For her sake I'll accomplish your bidding, be it what it may."

"Then say first to Dame Ute, the rich and noble Queen,
How upon this journey successful I have been.
How we have sped in wooing, that to my brothers bear ;
And let my friends right quickly the joyful tidings hear.

"And to my lovely sister you shall also say,
That I and Lady Brunhild would serve her willingly ;
And tell it to my servants and all who my rule own,
That what my heart most longed for I have fully won.

"And say to my dear nephew, the gallant Ortwein,
That he have seats in plenty ranged near the Rhine ;
And to all my kinsfolk let it be quickly told
That a great wedding feast with Brunhild I will hold.

"And to my fair sister let the tidings come,
That with these my guests we are returning home,
So that with kindly greeting she meet my lovely bride ;
For this will I her debtor evermore abide."

Then of the Lady Brunhild and all her court around
His leave took the Knight Siegfried, son of King Siegmund,
As well became the hero ; then rode he to the Rhine,
Upon this earth there could not better messenger have been.

With four and twenty Recken he to Worms drew near ;
That the King was not with him did in truth appear,
Whereat his court and servants were in trouble great,
Fearing that their Monarch had met some woeful death.

They sprang from off their horses, flashed round their glances
bright :

To them came swiftly Geiselher, the young and princely Knight,
And Gernot, his brother ; quick to exclaim was he,
When he the Monarch Gunther with Siegfried did not see :

“ Welcome, Sir Siegfried,—pray now let us hear,
What tidings of the King, my brother, you do bear ;
Much fear I we have lost him through Brunhilda's might,
This haughty wooing leaves us in sad and sorry plight.”

“ Give o'er such sad foreboding to you and his friends
Many a loving greeting my brave comrade sends :
In safety have I left him ; his messenger am I,
To spread the joyful tidings throughout all Burgundy.

“ Now help me to arrange it that it may happen so,
That to the Queen, Dame Ute, and your sister I may go :
To them will I speak freely the news I have to tell
Of Gunther and Brunhilda : with both it is right well.”

Then said the young Geiselher : “ That shall you surely do,
And to my dear sister give heartfelt pleasure true.
For my brother's sake sorrow enough has she ;
Right willingly she'll see you : your warranty I'll be.”

To whom the warrior Siegfried : "Wherein I serve her may,
That shall bring me truly a ready joy for aye.
Who will announce my coming to these ladies fair ?"
Replied the sturdy Geiselher : "That shall be my care."

Then quickly to his mother spake young Geiselher,
And also to his sister when he had found them there :
"Siegfried is come hither, the hero of Netherland ;
Him has my brother Gunther sent forward to our strand.

"Great tidings does he carry, how it fares with the King ;
I pray you now permit him his news to you to bring ;
Of Isenland great wonders can he clearly tell."
Not yet had these ladies freed them from sorrow's spell.

In their state apparel they robed them hastily,
And sent word to Siegfried, come to the court should he.
That did the hero gladly, fair was sho in his eyes,
Chriemhild, the lovely maiden, spake him in friendly wise :

"Welcome you are, Sir Siegfried, Ritter brave and true :
Where is my brother Gunther that he is not with you ?
Through Brunhilda's prowess I fear from us he is torn ;
Woe is me, poor maiden, would I had ne'er been born !"

Then spake the stalwart Ritter : "Give me an Envoy's need,
In truth, most noble ladies, to weep you have no need.
Safe and unharmed I left him : therein my tale is spent ;
To bring you both glad tidings was I hither sent.

"With kind and loving message, noble lady mine,
Commend them to your service, Gunther and his Queen
So banish now your tears, they will arrive here soon."
Such glad tidings had they for many a day not known.

Then with her snowy linen she cleared her lovely eyes
Of many a pearly tear ; and quickly did she rise
To thank the gallant Envoy for the tidings he had brought :
Of her grief and trouble she now took little thought.

She bade him then be seated, whereat right glad was he.
Then spake the lovely maiden : " Well pleasing 'twere to me.
If this your trusty service with gold I might repay :
For that you are too noble ; your debtor am I aye."

" And were I Monarch," said he, " over thirty lands,
Yet would I take gladly a present from your hands."
Then spake the noble maiden : " Sir Knight, it shall be so ;"
And bade her steward swiftly for a rich present go.

Four and twenty bracelets studded with jewels rare
She gave him for a token. But he with courtly air
Would not himself retain them, but gave them all unbound
To the lovely damsels, whom in the room he found.

Dame Ute, the Queen Mother, proffered her service then.
" I will now fully tell you," said the stalwart Thane,
" What the King desireth when he comes to the Rhine,
That, Lady, if you compass, his hearty thanks you'll win.

" His guests so rich and noble—such was his behest—
Right well you should receive them ; also he made request,
That a fair riding meet them at Worms upon the strand.
For that the King has sent me thus swiftly to your land."

" That will we do and gladly," said the lovely maid ;
" Wherein I aught can serve him he shall not be gainsaid.
With kind and trusty friendship shall all his wish be done."
Mantled her cheek with blushes, which she from love had won,

Never did Prince's Envoy such a welcome find,
And if she might have kissed him 'twere greatly to her mind ;
Natheless in loving fashion he parted from the maid.
Then did the stout Burgundians as the Knight had said.

Sindolt and Haunolt, and Sir Rumolt there,
A bustling time and busy must together share,
In ranging seats and benches at Worms upon the strand ;
The royal stewards also found work enough on hand.

The Palace and the chambers were adorned all
To greet the coming strangers : in King Gunther's Hall
Was heard the heavy footstep of many a serving-man ;
Thus, with great rejoicing, the courtly pomp began.

Thither was seen riding many a gallant knight,
Friends of the three Princes : these they did invite
To give a hearty welcome to those from o'er the main.
Rich and goodly raiment was from the presses ta'en.

Now was heard the tidings that already one might view
Brunhilda's warriors coming ; fast the concourse grew,
Countless people thronging to Burgundian ground.
Hei ! what stalwart Degen on either side were found !

Then spake the lovely Chriemhild : " All you maidens mine,
Who in this great reception wish with me to join,
Seek out from your presses robes and jewels rare :
So shall we from these strangers praise and honour share."

Now forward came the Recken, their equerries were told
To bring there costly saddles all embossed with gold,
Whereon might ride the ladies from Worms down to the Rhine :
Richer riding gear has surely ne'er been seen.

Hei ! what a golden shimmer from each steed was thrown !
Glanced from every bridle many a precious stone ;
Of rich cloth were the trappings on which much gold there lay ;
These were for the ladies ; merry they were and gay.

Now stood the horses ready in the court below
For many a noble maiden, as I have let you know ;
The dainty narrow breast-bands, which each steed did bear,
Were of silk the finest, whereof one much might hear.

Six and eighty ladies followed in the train,
Each with a fair head-coif ; to Chriemhilda then
The lovely ones came trooping in their robes so rare ;
Many noble maidens in gay attire were there.

Four and fifty maidens out of Burgundy,
They were the very fairest that one e'er could see ;
Over their pretty laces their golden locks fell down.
What the King had asked for he was quickly shown.

Costly were their dresses—the best that one could get,
They rode in royal fashion the stranger knights to meet ;
In her rosy beauty each peerless maiden stood :
He whose heart did not gladden was eke of feeble mood.

Of ermine and of sable a goodly show was there.
Lovely arms and hands shone out in beauty rare
Adorned with silken bracelets, which well might please the eye ;
No trouble they had spared, that no one could deny.

And pretty sashes many, of rich and beauteous sheen,
Over their gay dresses floating around were seen,
Broidered by fairest fingers with silk from Araby.
Many a happy hour did these maidens see.

Laced in a lovely bodice was each noble maid,
In all her peerless beauty. She might well be sad
Whose rosy colour did not her gay attire outshine :
Such bevy of fair handmaids never had a queen.

Now as these lovely ladies came forward robe in hand,
Those who should escort them motionless did stand ;
Of high and noble Recken a goodly train was there,
With many a mighty buckler and many an ashen spear.

TENTH ADVENTURE.

How Brunhilda was received at Worms.

AND now across the Rhine-stream with many a knight one saw
The King and his companions drawing near the shore.
One saw, too, many maidens on horses led by hand ;
They who should give them welcome were ready on the strand.

When now the Island strangers with the ships came in,
And the Nibelungen, who were in Siegfried's train,
They hasted to the landing ; swiftly they plied the oar,
Seeing such friends of Gunther's waiting them on the shore.

Now must I tell you also of the wealthy Queen,
Ute, the noble Lady, and how her maids between
She came forth from the Castle and rode down to the pier.
Many a knight and maiden made acquaintance there.

Holding Chriemhild's bridle Gexe the Duke was seen,
But only past the Castle ; Siegfried the Degen keen,
He must attend her farther, the fair and noble maid,
For this the hero's service how richly she him paid.

Ortowein the Degen was at Ute's side,
And many a gallant Recke by some dame did ride.
Such bevy of fair ladies, all must well allow,
At any joyous meeting was never seen till now.

Feats of knightly daring and high chivalry
Were practised by the heroes (how could that fail to be ?)
Before the lovely Chriemhild, as to the shore she came.
Then from her steed was lifted each fair and noble dame.

Now was Gunther landed, the stranger knights likewise,
What lances stout were broken to glad the ladies' eyes !
On the shields were ringing many a mighty stroke ;
Hei ! what sturdy blows the costly bucklers took !

Before the place of landing the lovely maidens stood ;
Gunther and his comrades bore them o'er the flood ;
By her soft hand led he Brunhild, his fair Queen.
In pretty rival fashion were robes and jewels seen.

With what gentle kindness did Chriemhilda go,
To Brunhild and her maidens, a welcome glad to show !
Around each neck so lovely one saw white hands pressed,
As each the other clasping right lovingly they kissed.

Then with noble greeting spake Chriemhild the fair :
"To this our country shall you a hearty welcome share
From me, and from my mother, and all our friends so true,
And from our knights and kinsmen." Then embraced the two.

And oft again in loving arms were clasped the twain,
Such a friendly meeting ne'er before was seen ;
As these royal ladies on the fair bride pressed,
Dame Ute and her daughter her sweet mouth often kissed.

As Brunhilda's ladies now stood upon the strand,
By stalwart Recken were they soon taken by the hand,
In kind and loving fashion, the noble maidens fair.
Many a peerless beauty stood with Brunhild there.

Awhile they yet refrained to give a fair embrace,
Rosy lips then many received a loving kiss.
Standing still together the Princesses were seen—
A sight which gladdened greatly many a Ritter keen.

Needs must show their glances what has before been told,
That ere that day did never any eyes behold
Two such lovely maidens ; to that they well might swear
One saw in their fair bodies nothing false was there.

To many a lady's fancy.—for her lovely form,
And for her beauty—Gunther's bride did bear the palm ;
Yet there were many wise ones who stoutly did maintain
That, o'er the Lady Brunhild, Chriemhild the prize would gain.

Assembled now together fair dames and lovely maids,
One saw these beauteous women in rich attire arrayed.
Silken tents stood many, and rich pavilions gay,
Filling all the open which before Worms lay.

Gunther's friends pressed round him that they might see the show.
Brunhild and Chriemhilda were invited then to go,
And all their maidens with them, where they some shade might
find :

To guide them, the Burgundians were right well inclined.

Now were the guests all mounted and ready for the Joust ;
Through the shining bucklers many a spear was thrust.
The air with dust was laden, as if the land had grown
Scorched in some mighty furnace: then were true heroes known.

At the knights' encounters maidens fair looked on.
Well rode with his Degen Siegfried, Siegmund's son,
In many a swift tilting before the tents so gay ;
•His thousand Nibelungen he had with him that day.

Then came Von Troneg Hagen—summoned by the King,
With courtly grace he bade them cease the tourneying,
So that the ladies might not with dust be covered o'er :
From the guests of willing obedience he was sure.

Then spake Gernot the Degen : “ Let stand the horses there
Till it begins to freshen, then we these ladies fair
Can better homeward escort to the Palace Hall :
So when the King will forward ready are we all.”

Now over all the field was stayed the knightly play,
Knights and fair ladies passed the time away
In soft and gentle dalliance, and sweetest pleasures knew :
Thus did the hours pass over till they could their course pursue.

When the twilight gathered, lessening the sun's ray,
And the air grew cooler, no longer did they stay ;
Knights and ladies swiftly to the Castle pressed ;
With many amorous glances was each fair form caressed.

Then did the sturdy henchmen ride hard the prize to gain
Before their noble masters, as custom did obtain,
E'en to the Palace entrance, there sprang the King to ground ;
The ladies had all honour, as with brave knights is found.

Now for a while were parted the two Princesses fair.
Ute and her daughter together did repair,
With all their maids of honour, to a spacious Hall :
A joyous burst of pleasure was around them all.

Seats were placed in order ; the King desired to go
With his guests to table ; at his side did show
The fair and lovely Brunhild, who now did wear the crown
In the King's dominion : rich enough she had grown.

Many tables were there spreading broad and fair,
Well-covered as was fitting with rich and plenteous cheer ;
Of aught that could be wanted nothing scant was seen ;
Around the King were sitting many Degen keen.

The servants of the Monarch in ewers of red gold
Handed round the water. 'Twere idle to be told
By any one there present that he had e'er before
In better fashion feasted : I would believe it never more.

Before the golden ewer to the Rhine's landlord came,
Upsprang the warrior Siegfried—he could do it without shame—
And of his troth did mind him, and what his pledge had been,
Ere he the Lady Brunhild in Isenland had seen.

He said : " You must remember how you swore by your hand,
If we the Lady Brunhild should bring into this land,
Your sister you would give me ; where then is now your oath ?
You know that on this journey to help you I was not loath."

To his guest said Gunther : " You have well reminded me :
In what my hand has sworn to I will not perjured be ;
Help you in what you covet will I with all my might."
Then bade he they should Chriemhild to the Court invite.

With many lovely maidens came she to the Hall ;
Then upstart Geiselher from his seat before them all :
" Bid them stand back," said he, " all these maidens fair ;
My sister shall alone be with King Gunther here."

Onward passed Chriemhilda to the Monarch's side ;
Many noble knights and lords were there beside,
In the Hall so spacious. They called for silence there :
Now drew the Lady Brunhild to the table near.

She knew not yet the story she must hear that day.
Then said the Monarch Gunther to the Degen in his pay :
"Now help me, that my sister take Siegfried for her man."
With one voice they shouted : "That were nobly done."

Then spake the Monarch Gunther : "Chriemhild, sister dear,
For your virtue's sake from my oath absolve me here.
To a Knight I pledged you—if you with him will wed,
My desire and promise will thus through you be paid."

Replied the noble maiden : "Dear brother mine,
You shall not be a suitor, my wish shall follow thine ;
What you now would bid me that shall be as done :
Truly will I love him whom you give me for my own."

For joy and for love Siegfried blushed rosy red ;
He begged to Lady Chriemhild his service might be paid ;
They let them stand together in a circle wide,
And asked her if to this Knight she would be a bride.

With sweet maiden coyness awhile she backward drew ;
Yet was the Knight so noble, so tender, and so true,
That she could no other but take him by the hand ;
His troth also plighted the Prince of Netherland.

As he so dearly loved her, and she her love had shown,
Around the tender maiden his stalwart arms were thrown ;
He drew her closer to him in a fond embrace ;
Then before all the heroes he gave the maid a kiss.

The servants bowed before him when of this they were aware ;
The highest place of honour the hero now could share,
By Chriemhilda seated ; all did him homage pay ;
The Nibelungen also must the Knight obey.

The King sate at the table by Brunhild the maid ;
Then saw she Chriemhilda (that made her wondrous sad !)
By Sir Siegfried sitting ; to weep she then began,
So that her many tears adown her fair cheeks ran.

Then spake the Rhine's great landlord : " What ails you, lady
mine,
That you have thus beclouded your bright sunny eyne?
You should, in sooth, be gladsome, for you are now the Queen
Of all my land and castles, and o'er many a worthy Thane."

" Good cause have I for weeping," said the lovely maid ;
" For your sister's sake I am with sorrow sad ;
I see her sitting yonder by your vassal's side,
Well must I aye be weeping that such ill should her betide."

To whom the Monarch Gunther : " Fret not for that, I pray ;
The story of this wooing you shall hear another day,
And why I have my sister to Siegfried given for wife ;
Well may she with the hero live a happy life."

She said : " I have no patience with her beauty and modesty ;
Knew I but where to go I would soon far from you flee,
Nor will I ever, mark you, lie close at your side,
Until I know why Ohriemhild has become Siegfried's bride."

To her the Monarch Gunther : " That shall you understand :
He has like me dominion o'er castles and o'er land,
You may right well believe it, he is a King indeed,
And therefore have I given him the fair and peerless maid."

Whate'er the King might answer sad remained her mood ;
Now hasted from the table the stalwart Ritter good :
With many a mailed footstep the castle did resound,
The Host that these his guests too long did tarry found.

He thought : " 'Twere softer lying by my lady fair."
And many a charming vision came swiftly to him there,
What of untold rapture he from her love should win ;
Then on the Lady Brunhild to glance he did begin.

The guests were soon now bidden to cease their knightly show,
With his sweet maiden bride the King to bed would go :
At foot of the great staircase together now were met
Chriemhild and Brunhilda—no hate did part them yet.

Swiftly came the servants—there was no tarrying,
The chamberlains so wealthy to each a light did bring.
Thus parted were the Recken in the two Kings' pay ;
One saw full many a Degen fare with Siegfried on his way.

By this were our two heroes to their chambers come ;
In love's sweet contest thought they both to overcome
Each one his lovely partner ; all radiant was their mood :
Right merrily and fairly Siegfried his lady wooed.

As the stalwart Degen by Chriemhilda lay,
So blithely she him 'countered in love's gentle play
That to his heart he held her—she was his life, his heaven :
Not for a thousand ladies would he that one have given.

Of their merry nuptials more speech you shall be spared ;
But listen while I tell you how it with Gunther fared,
And with the Lady Brunhild : noble knights have lain
By other ladies truly, and found kinder entertain.

The people now had left them, the dames and the groomsmen,
The chamber door was quickly fastened from within,
He thought that he the maiden should clasp so lovingly :
Yet long he fain must tarry ere she his wife would be.

In her fair smock of linen within the bed she lay.
"Now shall all be mine," thought the Ritter gay,
"Which I have so longed for many and many a year."
With her wondrous beauty his heart she well might cheer.

To quench the light the Monarch no longer did delay.
Then went the worthy Degen where the fair one lay ;
By her side he laid him, what bliss was his untold,
As round the lovely maiden his arms he did enfold.

Sweet and loving kisses his guerdon should have been,
If so had permitted the fair and noble Queen,
But haughtily she spurned him—thereat his grief was great.
He sought his joy to compass and found but steadfast hate.

She said : "Sir Knight, I pray you, your purpose to forego,
What you are desiring cannot now be so.
A maid I will continue, Sir King, be well assured,
Till I that story fathom." So wrathful was her word.

For her love he wrestled till he her smock did tear :
Then reached for her girdle the noble maiden fair,
A right stoutish girdle which at her waist she wore :
Hereby soon the Monarch came to trouble sore.

His hands and feet together the sturdy maiden bound,
And on a nail she hung him, which in the wall she found.
As he disturbed her slumber, she his love forbade ;
By dint of her fierce fury had he become nigh dead.

For mercy to entreat her the Monarch now was fain :
"My hands, I pray thee, loosen, my most noble Queen.
I promise you, fair lady, you shall untroubled lie,
I will, in sooth, right seldom seek you again so nigh."

She asked not how he fared while she in comfort lay ;
So must he hang suspended all night until the day,
Till the lovely morning through the casement shone :
If ever he had courage, in sooth, he now had none.

"Now tell me, noble Gunther," quoth the lovely maid,
"How will it please you when by your servants it is said
That you were found suspended—tied by a lady's hand ?"
Answered the noble Ritter : "Small good to you were gained,

"And to me still less honour," spake the worthy Thane ;
"For your own fair name's sake take me now in again.
Let my love for you be as mighty as it will,
My hands again shall never seek to work you ill."

His hands then she loosened : he went as soon as freed
Again into the bed where lay the lovely maid ;
He laid him down so distant that he her linen fine
Seldom or never 'countered ; thus would she maid remain.

Then came the grooms-in-waiting with fresh apparel gay—
Of these they had, in good sooth, enough in hand that day.
Amid the joy surrounding right mournful was his mood ;
To the Monarch Gunther their mirth seemed little good.

As was the ancient custom, which they did well obey,
Gunther and Brunhilda did no longer stay,
But hied them to the Minster, where a mass was sung ;
There came also Siegfried, and eke a mighty throng.

Full and kingly honours there to them were shown,
Ready for their coming were royal robes and crown,
Consecrated were they : soon as that had been,
Standing all be-crowned the noble four were seen.

Many squires were knighted, six hundred or even more,
Believe it you may surely, honour they had therefore ;
Great rejoicings were there through all Burgundian lands ;
Many a spear was clanging in warriors' mailed hands.

At the casement sitting were lovely maidens seen ;
Before them swiftly glittered many a shield's bright sheen.
Meanwhile apart the Monarch stood by himself alone :
Let who would be rejoicing he looked but sadly on.

For him and for Siegfried how different was their mood ;
Well guessed he what amiss was, the noble Degen good.
To the King straight went he and to inquire began :
"How fared you now this last night, Sir Gunther, tell me plain."

To his guest spake the Monarch : "Very shame and scorn
Have I from my partner in my own castle borne.
I sought but to embrace her and she bound me hands and all ;
Then to a nail she bore me and hung me high on the wall.

"There did I hang in anguish all night until the day
Before she would release me ; how softly there she lay !
This tell I you in secret and for your friendship true."
Outspake the warrior Siegfried : "This must I greatly rue.

"In this, too, I can help you, if your anger you will hide ;
I will engage that this night you lie so near her side,
That she her love to give you no longer shall refrain."
This heard the Monarch gladly after all his pain.

"Look now at these my hands, how swollen they appear,
So mightily she pressed them as but a child I were,
That from my very nails she forced the blood to flow ;
Little doubt had I that I soon my death should know."

Replied the Degen Siegfried : " It will all be well ;
In sooth, we two of last night have different tales to tell.
Thy sister Chriemhilda is to me dearer than my life ;
So must the Lady Brunhild become to-night your wife."

Then said Siegfried : " This night to your chamber I will hie,
In my Tarnkappe —unseen by any eye ;
And that of this service no one else may know,
See that the grooms of chamber all to their quarters go.

" The light will I extinguish from your servant's hand ;
That I your room have entered you will then understand.
Since I so gladly serve you, I will win for you your wife ;
To-night she well shall love you—on that I stake my life."

" If you will not embrace her," the Monarch made reply,
" My beloved lady, so right well pleased am I ;
Do whatsoe'er is needful, if you can conquer her,
I will, in sooth, forgive you, I hold her in such fear."

" There is my hand," quoth Siegfried, " by my troth I swear,
Embrace her that I will not ; your lovely sister dear
To me is before any that ever I have seen."
Well did King Gunther trust the hero without stain.

Then to knightly combats merrily they went ;
In many a tilt and tourney the passing hours were spent :
When the noble ladies would to the Hall repair,
The chamberlains took order that the way was clear.

Soon of men and horses was all the courtyard free.
The Queens by two Bishops shown to their seats should be,
As they before the Princes to the feast would go.
Followed them in their passage stalwart knights enow.

In happy mood the Monarch was to fair hope inclined ;
What Siegfried had him promised was ever in his mind.
The day seemed long and weary as it thirty years had been ;
For love of his fair lady his longing was so keen.

Hardly could he tarry till the meal was done.
To the lovely Brunhild a summons came full soon,
And to Chriemhild also, to bed they should repair :
Hei ! what mighty Degen in their service were !

Siegfried, the gay hero, by his fair lady's side
Sate in loving fashion in bliss unalloyed ;
Her soft white hands so tender sought his lovingly,
Till e'en before her eyes he vanished suddenly.

When 'mid her caresses he no more was seen,
To her maids-in-waiting quickly spake the Queen :
'This is wondrous strange that the King is gone,
Who then can have taken his hands from my own ?'

None knew how to answer. Then hasted Siegfried round,
Where with their lights all ready the chambergrooms he found ;
These he quick extinguished, himself the while unseen :
That it was Siegfried knew King Gunther well, I ween,

And knew his purpose also : he then bade begone
The maidens and the ladies. When haply that was done,
The noble King himself shut to the chamber door,
And with two strong bolts he made the fastening sure.

Behind the rich bed-hangings he concealed the light.
Then began a drama the which no man could write,
Siegfried, the stalwart Degen, and the lovely maid :
Now was the Monarch Gunther at heart both glad and sad.

Then laid him down Sir Siegfried by the fair Queen nigh.
She said : " Come leave that, Gunther, whate'er your wish may
be,

That you come not to trouble as you did yestreen ;
In very sooth my hands shall work you woe again."

He let no sound escape him, never a word spake he ;
Well heard what passed King Gunther tho' them he could not
see ;

Little of love I reckon passed betwixt the pair,
Not much of joyful rapture in that bed could he share.

As if he were King Gunther himself he by her laid,
And with his arms encircled the fair and lovely maid ;
Out of bed she threw him against a wooden frame,
So with a stool his head in sounding contact came.

With all his strength upstarted quickly the stalwart man
To make a better trial ; as he that began,
And would by force compel her, great was her wrath indeed.
Methinks such fight by woman will ne'er again be made.

As he would not leave her upsprang the maiden fair :
" 'Tis a deed unmanly that you thus my linen tear ;
You are but a rude groom, but you shall ill betide,
Right sorely shall you rue it," spake the noble maid.

She threw her arms so lovely around the stalwart man,
And would fast have bound him as she the King had done,
So that in bed she softly might slumber till the morn.
What cruel vengeance took she for her linen torn !

What helped him now his manhood and all his strength in fight ?
Proof she gave him ample of her fair body's might :
With a force o'erwhelming she carried him along,
And by the bed she pressed him into a corner down.

"Woe is me," thought Siegfried, "shall I body and life
Lose now by this maiden, so shall every wife,
In all future ages, bear a merry mood
At our expense, the which in sooth I find not good."

The King heard all that passed and feared how it might be.
Siegfried grew sore ashamed, a wrathful man was he.
With desperate strength he hasted the struggle to renew,
For this further onset Brunhilda well must rue.

As she pressed him under, his wrathful strength so great
So far did avail him that despite her scornful hate
He from the ground upraised him. Her grief at this was sore.
They fought throughout the chamber and over all the floor.

Trouble and sorrow also must King Gunther share ;
Often amid the struggle he must fly here and there.
So fearful was the contest that the wonder grew,
If of them would either to death the other do.

Needs must the Monarch Gunther incline to either side ;
Yet most he feared what Siegfried's death might him betide.
And she in very earnest his life would not have spared :
Well had run King Gunther to help him had he dared.

The strife raged long and fiercely betwixt the sturdy twain,
But in the end he brought her back to the bed again ;
However she might struggle her power weaker grew.
Gunther in his trouble many a strange thought knew.

Long seemed it to the Degen ere he could the maid subdue,
His hands in hers she pressed till from the nails outflew
The blood from her sheer strength ; sore was the hero's need :
Then forced he to disassemble the right noble maid,

The fierce unruly temper which she was wont to bear.
Silent the King remained, yet nought escaped him there.
On the bed he pressed her that she aloud must cry ;
Stalwart Siegfried's vigour grieved her mightily.

She caught now at her girdle, which at her side she found,
Wherewith she sought to bind him ; sternly he grasped her
round,
So that her limbs loud cracked and all her body too.
Then was the struggle over : Gunther his bride might woo.

She said : " Most noble Monarch, spare my life, I pray,
My unruly conduct pardon well you may :
Strive will I no longer my maidhood to retain ;
Well can one see truly that you women master can."

Lightly forth stepped Siegfried, while quiet lay the maid,
As though of clothes to rid him he but occasion had.
A golden ring he quickly had from her finger ta'en,
That so, in the fierce struggle, she might be spared from pain.

Her girdle also took he, a trusty belt and good,
I know not why, perchance in reckless haughty mood.
These to his wife gave he, which brought him many a care.
Now softly lay together the King and maiden fair.

With loving arms he pressed her, as him it well became ;
Then must she bear with patience her anger and her shame.
Beneath his fond caresses her ruddy colour paled ;
Hei ! how before love's power her mighty strength soon failed !

Henceforth in strength she only could with other wives compare.
How fondly he embraced her lovely form so fair ;
When she would withstand him what could it her avail !
With his love so greatly did Gunther now prevail.

How softly then the Degen by the lady lay
In sweet and happy dalliance till the break of day !
Strode now to his quarters Siegfried back again ;
There from a fair lady he had good entertain.

Her questioning he parried, which she soon begun,
And for a while kept hidden what he for her had won,
Until in his own country the crown she came to wear ;
Whatever she might long for he gave her gladly there.

The break of day found Gunther far cheerier in mood
Than on the previous morning : this was a token good,
Throughout his spacious kingdom, to many a worthy Thane ;
They who to court were bidden to serve him were full fain.

The feast and High-tide lasted till the fourteenth day,
So that the sound of revels and other knightly play
Was never intermitted, the which one gladly saw.
On the coast the Monarch set but little store.

Gunther's kinsmen also, as princely use did hold,
Gave away in his honour rich dresses and red gold,
Silver gave they also, and many a noble steed.
The knights to their followers, ample presents made.

There brave Siegfried also from the far Netherland,
To his thousand warriors freely gave in hand
The costly robes and trappings they had brought to the Rhine,
Noble steeds and harness : so fair their life did shine.

Before the costly presents they could yet divide,
Too long they seemed to tarry who for their own homes sighed.
Ne'er saw one servants ever in such raiment dight.
Thus were the nuptials ended : rode thence many a knight.

ELEVENTH ADVENTURE.

Siegfried takes his wife home.

WHEN now all the strangers had set out on their way,
Spake the hero Siegfried to the knights in his pay :
“ We too will now equip us to journey to our land.”
Great joy was this to Chriemhild when she did understand.

To her husband spake she : “ When shall we take the road ?
In this to greatly hasten seems to me naught but good ;
But first let my brothers divide the land with you.”
Grieved at this was Siegfried when her wish he knew.

To him came the Princes, and spake to him all three :
“ Be well assured, Sir Siegfried, that we will ever be
Your true and helpful servants even to the death.”
Inclined him low the hero in simple loving faith.

“ The land and eke the castles,” said young Geiselher,
“ All that to us belongeth we now with you will share,
And of the wide country which does to us pertain,
With the Lady Chriemhild your fair share you will gain.”

Then to the Princes answered the Knight of Netherland,
When he their lordly wishes did hear and understand :
“ Now may God bless your kingdom to you many a year ;
Small need of that have I—I and my wife so dear.

“ She will not want the portion which you would give to her :
If my life be spared the crown she well may wear,
And be the richest lady that e’er existed yet ;
But for your gracious offer am I ever in your debt.”

Then spake the Lady Chriemhild : " Though you my land despise,
With the Burgundian lances it is well otherwise ;
Such may a king right gladly take with him to his land,
And these shall now apportion with me my brother's band."

Quoth Gernot the Degen : " Take whom thou wilt with thee,
Of gallant knights right willing many here I see.
From thirty hundred Recken take now a thousand men
For thy chosen followers." Sought Chriemhilda then

Of Von Troneg Hagen, and of Ortewein,
If they and their brave troopers would follow in her train ?
Then began Sir Hagen a scornful part to play ;
He said : " To none can Gunther give us his knights away.

" Others of his servants with you forth may fare ;
Of the Troneger temper you are well aware.
We will with King Gunther here at his Court abide,
And give him steady service, as we have always paid."

The matter so was ended, they turned and went within.
Of her trusty servants Chriemhild's love did win
Two and thirty maidens and five hundred men ;
Eckewart the Margrave went in Chriemhild's train.

Their leave now were taking every knight and squire,
Maidens and fair ladies, as custom did require.
With many a kiss they parted, though unmoved withal,
And joyfully they set out from King Gunther's Hall.

Rode with them their comrades far upon the way.
Nightly quarters had they where their journey lay,
As it pleased their fancy in all King Gunther's land.
To meet them sent King Siegmund Envoys from Netherland,

That he might know surely, and Siegelind the Queen,
If their son was coming from Worms upon the Rhine
With Dame Ute's daughter, Chriemhild the lovely one :
Tidings of more gladness could not, in sooth, be known.

"What joy is mine," said Siegmund, "that I the day should see,
When the lovely Chriemhild crownèd here shall be !
With how much greater lustre will my kingdom shine ;
And my dear son Siegfried himself as King shall reign."

Then to the swift Envoys Siegelind gave good pay,
Heavy gold and silver, and suits of velvet gay.
Much joyed she for the tidings which they had brought to her ;
Her train each as his standing, she robed with hasty care.

They told her who were coming with Siegfried to the land ;
Then bade she to get ready fit benches out of hand,
Where he before his subjects fully crownèd should be ;
Then rode out to meet him those in Siegmund's pay.

Were better welcome ever in Siegmund's kingdom shown
Than to these brave Degen, it is to me unknown.
Fair Siegelind herself rode Chriemhilda to meet ;
With her were ladies many and noble Recken fleet.

'Twas yet a long day's journey ere the guests drew near,
Countrymen and strangers much fatigue must bear,
Till at length they entered into a wide domain,
Santen was it named, where they should hereafter reign.

With many a loving caress Siegmund and Siegelind
Kissed the lovely Princess, with greeting sweet and kind,
Also the Degen Siegfried ; where was their trouble now ?
On all their knightly comrades warm welcome they did bestow.

They let the guests be guided before King Siegmund's Hall.
The lovely maidens gently were lifted one and all
Down from off their horses ; many a stalwart man
To wait on these fair ladies with eager zeal began.

Whate'er of nuptial splendour upon the Rhine had been,
Here was for each Degen such costly raiment seen,
As never he had owned before in all his days.
Well might they of such wonders speak with highest praise.

Enough they had and more too, of glittering array,
Liveries of red gold the servants wore away ;
With precious stones and laces deftly worked therein ;
Carefully to all this saw Siegelind the Queen.

Then to his friends around him Siegmund the King did say :
" I would to Siegfried's kinsmen make it known this day,
That he before these Recken now my crown shall wear."
The Netherlanders gladly did these tidings hear.

He gave him then his crown with all his land and state :
Thus was he Lord and Monarch. When he in judgment sate,
So clear and firm his sentence in every cause was heard,
That fair Chriemhilda's husband was not a little feared.

In these lofty honours lived he, truth to tell,
And for ten long years the realm he governed well,
Till his lovely lady a son to him did bear,
Whereat his royal kinsfolk greatly gladdened were.

They had him quickly christened and would a name bestow,
Gunther, after his uncle, he would not shame, I trow.
If he his friends' hopes answered 'twere well with him indeed :
His training was well cared for, he might fairly thus succeed.

Now about this time died Siegelind the Queen,
So must Dame Ute's daughter play the full sovereign ;
This to the wealthy lady seemed fit enow.
For the Queen much sorrow did her people show.

And now upon the Rhine-beach, as one the news might hear,
To the rich King Gunther also a son did bear
Brunhild, the lovely lady, in land of Burgundy,
And for love of the hero, Siegfried, so named was he.

What tender care unceasing they to his nurture gave !
Gunther, the noble Monarch, let him a master have,
That so his years might find him trained in all things well.
Hei ! what troubles shortly on his kinsfolk fell.

In all lands near or distant it was freely told,
In what royal fashion lived the heroes bold
As the years passed over in Siegmund's wide domain :
So also with the Degen in wealthy Gunther's train.

The land of the Nibelungen did Siegfried's rule confess,
No one of his kinsmen did ere such wealth possess ;
Both King Schilbung's Recken and eke his land and hoard—
Through these was bold Siegfried a yet mightier lord.

Of hoards, the very greatest that ever knight did gain
From the haughty owners took the stalwart Thane ;
This on the lonely mountain fell to him in the strife :
Many a sturdy Recke therein lost his life.

In this he gained great honour, wer't but the half alone,
One must have still admitted the noble Recke shone
Of knights the very bravest that ever backed a steed :
All men feared his prowess,—in sooth they had good need.

TWELFTH ADVENTURE.

How Siegfried was invited to Worms.

Now pondered Queen Brunhilda each day that she did live :
"What haughty airs the Lady Chriemhild herself does give.
Yet is her husband Siegfried but our vassal known ;
Methinks in all these years he has scant service done."

Such thoughts she in her bosom in secret anger bore,
That they so long were absent troubled her full sore,
And that Siegfried so rarely did homage for his land ;
What of all this the meaning that would she understand.

She asked then of King Gunther if it well could be
That the Lady Chriemhild they at the Rhine might see.
To him alone she trusted the thought that swayed her mood ;
Her speech seemed to the Monarch, however, far from good.

Replied the wealthy Gunther : "How can that well be ?
To bring them to this country small chance of that I see.
They live too far distant. It cannot well be done."
To whom the dame gave answer with high and haughty tone .

"And let a vassal be of what high rank he will,
Whate'er his lord commandeth obey him he must still."
Fain to smile was Gunther as she such words did say ;
He took it not for service when Siegfried came that way.

Brunhilda said : "Dear husband, by the love I to you bear,
Help me now that Siegfried and your sister dear
Shall to this country journey, that we them here may see,
Nothing in truth could bring such happiness to me.

"Of your sister's virtue, and of her noble mood,
As often as I ponder it does me ever good ;
And how we were together when you took me for wife,
Well may she with honour love Siegfried all her life."

She ceased not to entreat him till the King made reply :
"Know that guests I never should more gladly see.
You need not be so urgent, swift messengers of mine
To both of them I'll send forth to bid them to the Rhine."

Then spake the royal lady : "Tell me now, I pray,
When you away will send them, and also on what day
You will these our dear friends invite into this land ?
And whom you will send thither ? that let me understand."

Gunther replied : "That will I. Thirty knights of mine
Shall ride on this journey." He called them to him then,
And gave them special charges for King Siegfried's Court ;
Brunhild for their equipment much rich raiment brought.

The King said : "All ye Recken, now list my words, I pray,
And in naught keep silence of all that I do say
To Siegfried, the strong hero, and my sister dear ;
On all the earth is no one to my heart so near.

"And bid them both come hither to us on the Rhine,
For this will I and Brunhild their debtors aye remain.
Ere yet the summer bloometh, he and his comrades true,
Shall many a knight find with me to give him honour due.

"And to King Siegmund also this message give, I pray,
That I, and these my Recken, do honour him alway.
And say, too, to my sister, that she tarry not behind,
If for a royal tourney she ever were inclined."

Brunhild and Dame Ute, with what ladies were at hand,
Sent right courtly greetings into Siegfried's land
To many a gallant Degen and many a lady fair.
By King Gunther's bidding the knights soon ready were.

They stood prepared for starting : by this, too, were at hand
Their horses and equipment ; so rode they from the land.
For the goal they hasted whereto they forth should fare.
The King sent servants with them for their needs to care.

Three weeks' riding brought them to their journey's end.
At the Niblung fortress (whereto one did them send),
In the Norwegian marches, they the Degen found ;
Men and horses weary with long travel stood around.

Siegfried and Chriemhilda both the news did hear,
There were knights arrived, who such garb did wear
As in Burgundian country they were wont to see ;
From the couch she started where she resting lay.

Quick to the casement sent she one of her maiden band,
Who saw the bold Knight Gexe in the courtyard stand,
With him his companions who had ridden there ;
To ease her anxious bosom what glad news she did hear !

Then to her husband said she : " See you those Degen now
Who with the strong Knight Gexe stand in the court below ?
These has my brother Gunther sent to us down the Rhine."
Outspoke the stalwart Siegfried : " They are welcome, Lady
mine."

Quickly ran the servants where the Envoys stood,
Each in his turn, bade Siegfried, in right courteous mood,
To see to every comfort that his guests might need.
Great joy at their coming King Siegmund also had.

Lodgings soon were ready for Gexe and his train ;
The horses stood awaiting ; the Envoys went within
Where the noble Siegfried by Chriemhilda sate ;
They had their Court attending, therefore did they that.

The Host and his fair Lady uprose with courtesy,
A right warm welcome had then Sir Gexe of Burgundy,
And all those his comrades in King Gunther's pay,
That the wealthy Degen would seat him they did pray.

" First quit us of our message ere we rest from toil ;
Tho' we far have travelled, we yet can stand awhile.
The tidings we are bringing we fain to you would tell,
Gunther and Brunhilda both do fare right well.

" And Dame Ute also, their mother, greets you here,
With the noble Gernot and the young Geiselher,
And all their friends the nearest have given us like command,
To bid you courteous service from Burgundian land."

" Now God be praised," quoth Siegfried, " to them I well commend

Myself in love and honour, as to a trusty friend,
So also does their sister ; but let me farther hear
If our good friends their wonted courage high do bear.

" Has any wrong been offered since we went away
To my dear Lady's brothers, now tell me that, I pray,
To help them with true duty am I always fain
Until those their foemen of such service shall complain."

To whom the noble Margrave Gexe made reply :

" They are in all virtue full of courage high ;
They bid you to the Rhine-beach to join their revelry,
Right gladly would they see you, thereof no doubt can be.

"And the Lady Chriemhild, they trust, to come will deign,
When the winter quarter has passed away again,
Before the summer solstice they hope you both to see."
Then spake the stalwart Siegfried : " That can hardly be."

Then again spake farther Sir Gexo of Burgundy :
"Your mother the Dame Ute claims you right eagerly,
And Geiselher and Gernot—you will refuse in vain ;
That you live so far distant they must each day complain.

"Brunhilda, my Lady, and all her maidens fair,
Gladly gain tidings of you ; and could she but hear
That she again would see you, she were in joyous mood."
Now to the lovely Chriemhild such message seemed right good.

Gexo was her cousin. The Host bade seated be,
And poured wine for his guests ; they made no more delay.
By this came Siegmund also, when of the Envoys he was 'ware,
Right friendly spake the Monarch to the Burgundians there :

"Welcome are ye, Sir Knights, who for King Gunther ride,
Since the Lady Chriemhild was won—a peerless bride—
By my good son Siegfried, 'twere well we oftener saw
You here in this country. So grew our friendship more."

They said : " If he so wished it that should be gladly done ;
The toil of such a journey were but as pleasure known."
They brought their guests to table, and gave them ample fare.
Siegfried a fitting banquet gave to the Envoys there.

To tarry they constrained them during nine full days,
Until at length the Degen began complaint to raise,
That they so long delaying took not the road again.
His trusty friends King Siegfried summoned around him then.

He asked what they did counsel : He to the Rhine should fare ;
 ' brother-in-law Gunther has sent for me there,
 and his knightly brethren, to join his revelry.
 Not his land so distant I would fain comply.

Chriemhilda they ask too that she shall go with me ;
 Now, dear comrades, what our course shall be ?
 I must lead an army through thirty foreign lands,
 Not ready for the venture I trow are Siegfried's hands."

He answered him the Recken : " If your mood is to go
 this High-tide of feasting, our counsel you shall know :
 A thousand Recken ride with you to the Rhine,
 I call you with all honour with the Burgundians join."

He did the old King Siegmund of Netherlanders say :
 Would ye to this High-tide ? why was't not told to me ?
 As you are not too scornful, I too with you will go ;
 I'll bring two hundred Degen, so will your army grow."

" And will you then ride with us, my loving father dear ?"
Spake the gallant Siegfried, " that is glad news to hear ;
Before twelve days are over from here we will away."
To any who might need them they gave steeds and trappings gay.

When thus on the journey the King had fixed his mood,
On their homeward travel rode the swift Degen good,
Charged with a loving message to the Princes on the Rhine,
That in their bout of revelry he would right gladly join.

Siegfried and Chriemhilda, as I have oft heard say,
Gave more to the Envoys than they could bear away
On horseback on the journey,—he was a wealthy man.
Homewards their sturdy chargers they urged now gladly on.

Rich and gay apparel Siegfried and Siegmund gave
To all their trusty Recken ; while Eckewart the Margrave
Bade seek for ladies' robing, whate'er was best at hand,
Or what they else might gather throughout King Siegfried's land.

The saddles and the bucklers they quickly did prepare.
To the knights and ladies who to the Rhine should fare,
They gave whate'er they wanted, till none a wish could frame :
Many a haughty Recke to the Burgundians came.

Now on their homeward journey the Envoys swiftly sped,
And with them the Norwegian Gexe, Knight so dread ;
They found a hearty welcome, and from their saddles all
In hot haste they dismounted before King Gunther's Hall.

Old and young came flocking, as is always seen,
To learn what news there might be, to whom the Ritter keen :
"When to the King I tell it, then you will also hear."
Then with his companions to Gunther he did repair.

The King for very gladness sprang up from his seat ;
Hearty thanks received they, for their journey fleet,
From the lovely Brunhild. To the Envoys then spake he :
"How fares it now with Siegfried, who is so dear to me ?"

To whom the stalwart Gexe : "With joy flushed rosy red,
He and your sister ; never was such kind message sped
To his friends afar off before by any one,
As Siegfried and his father by our hands have shown."

Then spake to the Margrave the Lady Brunhild fair :
"Tell me, will Chriemhild come too, and does her beauty rare
Keep its surpassing splendour as it was wont to be ?"
"She will come full surely," brave Gexe did reply.

Then before Dame Ute the Envoys had to go.
Without a question asked they soon did let her know
What she to learn desired, "If Chriemhild was well?"
Of that and of her coming so quickly they did tell.

Nor failed they to the courtiers the rich gifts to display
Which they had from Siegfried, the gold and raiment gay ;
To all the Princes' subjects they were exposed to view :
For his great kindness Siegfried received all honour due.

"He may well," quoth Hagen, "be such a lordly giver,
He could not spend such riches—not if he lived for ever ;
The Nibelungen Hoard is at the King's command.
Hei ! if perchance it might come to Burgundian land !"

All the Court assembled great pleasure did receive
From the expected visit, so that from morn to eve
The Knights were very busy in the three Kings' train ;
Many a lordly custom began to rule again.

Hunolt the keen warrior, the Knight Sindolt too,
Had little time for resting, hourly they must do
Their duty as Purveyors, and many a seat provide ;
Ortwein too was helpful : great thanks was their need.

Rumolt was house steward—with what imperious word
He ruled it o'er his servants ! Many a kettle broad,
And pots and pans in plenty, quickly came to hand,
Wherein to cook the victuals for those coming to the land.

The ladies too, in good sooth, their labour did not spare,
Their robes were well embroidered with many a jewel rare,
Whose rays afar did glitter, all with the gold inlaid ;
When they had donned their dresses how brightly shone each
maid.

THIRTEENTH ADVENTURE.

The journey to Worms.

Now let us leave behind us all trouble and all care,
And tell how Lady Chriemhild and her maidens fair
From the Nibelung country journeyed to the Rhine ;
Never before had horses richer freight, I ween.

Chests of apparel many they sent upon the way ;
Amongst his troupe of Recken rode Siegfried the hero gay,
And the fair King's daughter in her joyous pride :
Yet to them all how swiftly great sorrow should betide.

At home they left behind them Siegfried's little son,
Child of the Lady Chriemhild. It must so be done.
For him what cruel sorrow this journey had in store—
His father and his mother he was to see no more.

With them also journeyed Siegmund the Monarch good ;
If he could have foretold all that happen would
At this High-tide of feasting, the same he ne'er had seen :
Greater woe could never to all his friends have been.

Swiftly-riding Envoys went before them on the way ;
To meet them came posting in marvellous array
Many of Ute's Recken and of Gunther's men :
Now for his guests did Gunther to stir busily begin.

He went to Lady Brunhild, whom he found seated near :
"Such a reception," said he, "as my sister gave you here,
Such am I now desirous that Siegfried's wife should see."
"That," said she, "give I gladly, she is right dear to me."

Then spake the wealthy Monarch : "They come with early morn ;
If you would well receive them let all be quickly done,
That so in this our kingdom surprised we may not be ;
Dearer guests than these have never come to me."

Without delay she ordered her maids and ladies fair
To seek out rich apparel, the best they had to wear,
In these should all her courtiers unto the guests be shown ;
Right willingly they did it if the truth were known.

Then hastened with their service those in Gunther's pay.
All his knights he summoned to go with him that day.
Forward in proud beauty rode Brunhild the Queen ;
For all her guests arriving was a fair greeting seen.

With what hearty gladness they were welcomed there !
'Twas thought that Chriemhilda to Lady Brunhild ne'er
Had such reception given, when she came to the Rhine.
Fain must all who saw it in great wonder join.

Now was the hero Siegfried and his troop in sight :
Many knights were noted wending to left or right
In the open spaces amid the countless throng ;
Free from dust and bustle could no one pass along.

When now the Monarch Gunther saw Siegfried drawing near,
And King Siegmund also, how warmly spake he there :
"Right welcome are you truly, and all these friends I see,
For this your journey hither we ever proud shall be."

Now God be praised " " " mund, the highly-honoured
man,

' Since the day when Siegfried your true friendship wan,
' hat I thus might meet you, my dearest wish has been."
' hen spake the Monarch Gunther : " Gladly this day I've seen."

Siegfried was received, as rightly should befall,
With the greatest honour—he was loved of all.
Much helped in knightly welcome, Gernot and Geiselher ;
Never again did guests such kind reception share.

And now the beauteous Queens were seen approaching near ;
The saddles were soon empty ; many a lady fair
On to the grass was lifted by stalwart hero's hand ;
Who serves the ladies gladly need seldom idle stand.

To each other hasted the Queens most lovingly.
The noble knights surrounding greatly rejoiced to see
The greeting warm which passed, between the lovely pair.
Many a knight 'gan render courtly service there.

The trusty Squires exchanged many a hand-shake free ;
Nor was there aught wanting of graceful courtesy,
Or of loving kisses the ladies fair between.
At this rejoiced greatly those in the royal train.

No longer did they tarry, but rode into the town ;
No had willed it Gunther, that to all it should be known,
How they were right welcome in land of Burgundy.
Harmed were the lovely ladies with feats of chivalry.

Then did Von Troneg Hagen and eke Sir Ortwein
In their noble puissance in proclamation join,
' hat whate'er was wanted it should be swiftly done :
To the guests much service was by these two knights shown.

before the Castle portal resounded many a blade
With sturdy blows and parries. Long was the halt there made
By both hosts and strangers, ere they within did go.
In such merry pastimes the hours fly swift, I trow.

Before the spacious Palace, they joyfully did press.
Many a noble Degen in rich and tasteful dress,
One everywhere saw standing by the bridal rein
Of fair and noble ladies ; then came the servants in.

To their sleeping quarters the guests conducted were,
Now and again one noted Brunhilda glancing there
At the Lady Chriemhild ; she was fair enough to see ;
Her lovely colour bore, e'en from the gold, the prize away.

Now in Worms' fair city in every street was heard
The gay song of the servants ; King Gunther gave the word
To Dankwart the Marshal that he for them should care ;
For the menials also he bade good rooms prepare.

Boarded they all were shortly, within or else without ;
Never before had strangers such a merry bout ;
Whatever one might covet, was quickly to him brought,
So wealthy was the Monarch ; no one need lack for aught.

Tight friendly was the service, no hatred was there yet.
The King at his table, with his guests around him sate.
Siegfried was seated near him as before had been ;
With him took their places many Ritter keen.

Twelve hundred of his Degen, around the table there
Langed them with the hero. Queen Brunhilda fair
Thought that a subject hardly richer than this could be ;
Yet she smiled on him kindly, well-pleased his wealth to see.

Now upon that evening, as the Monarch there did sit,
Many a costly garment was with the wine-cup wet ;
When the swift cupbearers did round the table go,
Eager zeal and willing service they could show.

As, at such feasts, the custom was always honoured there,
They let retire to slumber the dames and maidens fair.
Let whoe'er would come thither, the Host had him in mind,
Of hospitable kindness each one enough did find.

When the night was ended and the day's brightness shone,
One saw, from caskets taken, many a precious stone
On costly raiment glitter, sewn by woman's skill ;
They brought from hidden presses rich linen at their will.

While the hour yet was early, there came before the Hall
Many knights and squires ; uprose from them all
The early song of morning, which to the King was sung.
His thanks the Monarch gave them, as rode the heroes young.

Now with a mighty crashing was heard the trombones sound ;
Flutes and trumpets gave forth such stirring strains around,
That with the answering echo Worms' vast fortress rung ;
On their fiery coursers came the bold knights along.

In the field was holden some high knightly play
By the stalwart Recken ; many were there that day,
Whose young hearts beat highly in brave and joyous mood ;
Beneath the sturdy bucklers rode many Degen good.

At the lofty casements were seated ladies fair,
And lovely maidens also, in robes of beauty rare.
They saw with lances tilting, many a stalwart man ;
The Host with all his courtiers to ride himself began.

Thus passed away the morning, quickly it seemed to go,
Then to the Minster summoned by bell resounding slow,
Upon their horses mounted rode the ladies bright ;
Behind the Queens there followed many a gallant knight.

Before the Minster portal to the grass they were helped down.
Not yet for Chriemhilda did Brunhild hatred own.
Crowned they went together into the mighty fane :
Her love now soon departed—hot jealousy did reign.

While the mass was chanting their progress still was seen,
Amid the highest honours. They then returned again
To the royal table. Their joy did not decay
Amid these sports and pleasures up to the eleventh day.

To herself Brunhild pondered : “ This shall no longer be,
Contrive it as I best may, Chriemhild shall tell to me
Why her husband’s tribute has been so long delayed ?
He to us is subject—the question must be made.”

Thus her time she waited till the Fiend ruled it so,
That this mirth and pleasure should end with grief and woe.
What her heart was plotting, all too soon befell ;
Through this in many countries, great sorrow did prevail.

FOURTEENTH ADVENTURE.

How the Queens rated one another.

It was before the Vespers, and the armed clang
Of many stalwart Recken in the courtyard rang,
For the sake of pastime a Tourney there should be ;
Knights and ladies many hasted it to see.

The two Queens, so wealthy, seated together were,
Each of her own lord thinking, how he was without peer.
Then spake the lovely Chriemhild : " My husband there I see,
To him all this dominion might well subject be."

Outspake the Lady Brunhild : " How can that be shown ?
If none else were living, but thou and he alone,
Then might well the kingdom his command obey,
But while Gunther liveth, that will never be."

Again spake Lady Chriemhild : " Dost see him standing now ?
How above all Recken so nobly he does show,
As before the stars the full moon shineth clear !
Therefore must I ever a joyous spirit bear."

Then spake the Lady Brunhild : " How fair soe'er he be,
Valiant and noble, yet must he lower be
Than thy royal brother, Gunther, the peerless Knight :
He stands before all monarchs, as well thou knowst aright."

Said again Chriemhilda : " So dear to me my man,
That without all censure praise him now I can.
See how in many a combat he has great valour shown :
Now credit me, Brunhilda, Gunther's comrade he is known."

" That shall you, Chriemhilda, not put so cunningly,
For what I now tell you ample grounds there lie :
I heard them both declaring, when them I first did see,
And when the King had purposed to try his strength with me,

" In which my maiden love he did so stoutly gain,—
Then said Siegfried himself; he was King Gunther's man.
For subject then I held him, I heard him that confess."
Then spake the lovely Chriemhild : " So were I in evil stress.

" How could my noble brothers so have dealt with me,
That to any subject I should wedded be ?
In very sooth, Brunhilda, I must kindly beg of you,
That, for your love, you speak me, as in courteous use is due."

" Leave it unsaid I cannot," the Queen replied again ;
" Why should I surrender so many stalwart men,
Who, with the Degen Siegfried, to us do service owe ?"
Then did the lovely Chriemhild begin with wrath to glow.

" Thou mayst at least surrender the hope that on this earth
Aught service he will do thee : he is of nobler birth
Than my brother Gunther, my Knight so brave and free ;
Unsay now those pretensions that thou hast made to me.

" And I must ever wonder if he thy servant be,
And if we now, both of us, are subject to thy sway,
Why his meed of tribute so long has been unpaid ?
Of thy insulting speeches enough, in truth, I've had."

"Thou bearest thyself right proudly," answered her the Queen :
"Come now let us see whether this thy haughty mien,
Will bring thee here more honour than to me is owed."
Then were both the ladies in very wrathful mood.

To whom the Lady Chriemhild : "That shalt thou quickly know ;
Since thou hast my Siegfried claimed as thy subject now,
So shall this very day the knights of both Kings see,
Whether, before the Queen, the church I enter may.

"And thou to-day shalt see, too, what kingly rank is mine,
And how much more worthy my husband is than thine ;
Nor think I that to any I haughty shall appear.
To-day, too, thou shalt witness, how this thy subject here

"To Court before the heroes of Burgundy will go.
And higher will I rank me, than one did ever know
The daughter of a Monarch who here has borne the crown."
Thus betwixt the two Queens was bitter envy shown.

Then again spake Brunhild : "Wilt thou not subject be,
So must thou keep apart then, and all thy maids with thee,
From all these my courtiers, when we to Minster go."
For answer gave Chriemhilda : "That shall, in sooth, be so.

"Now robe yourselves, my maidens," spake Siegfried's lovely
dame,

"Myself I here would carry for ever free from shame.
Don all your richest raiment, let it be seen to-day ;
She shall take back the insult which she has cast on me."

No counsel pleased them better ; they sought their richest gear.
Soon saw one bravely robèd many ladies fair.
Apart with all her courtiers went the noble Queen ;
-The lovely Chriemhild also in beauteous dress was seen,

With three and forty maidens, who to the Rhine she brought,
Silken raiment wearing all in Arabia wrought ;
So came they to the Minster, fair were they to be seen ;
Before the gates were waiting the knights in Siegfried's train.

The people wondered greatly how it happened so,
That the royal ladies thus apart should go,
And why they not together went as heretofore.
To many a gallant Degen this was a trouble sore.

Now before the Minster stood King Gunther's Queen :
Then found many Degen a pleasant entertain
With the beauteous maidens whom they encountered there.
Then came the lovely Chriemhild with many a maiden fair.

Such robes as e'er beforetime had decked some high-born maid,
Matched with these maidens' dresses would light as wind have
sped.

So great their Lady's riches, that thirty noble Queens
Could not have shown such splendour as on one of these was seen.

Whatever one might long for, no one well could say,
That he before had ever seen such a proud array,
As round these lovely maidens at that hour there shone :
The blame lay with Brunhilda, else had Chriemhild not so done.

Now came they both together before the Minster gate ;
Then did Gunther's lady, in anger and in hate,
Call on Chriemhild to tarry, in scornful words and slow :
" Before wife of a Monarch a subject shall not go."

Then spake the lovely Chriemhild, angry was her mood :
" Couldst thou have kept silent, 'twould have been for thy good.
Thou hast thyself dishonoured thine own body fair ;
How could a concubine as a king's wife appear ?"

"Whom wouldst thou concubine?" spake the haughty Queen.
"That will I thee," quoth Chriemhild; "thy body fair, I weon,
Was at first embraced by Siegfried, my dear man,
Sooth was it not my brother, who thy maidhood wan.

"Where could thy wits have wandered? It was a cruel snare,
That thou shouldst let him love thee if he thy subject were.
Thus without any reason," said Chriemhild, "plaintest thou
now."

"In very sooth," quoth Brunhild, "this shall Gunther know."

"What harm could that do me? Thy pride has thee betrayed;
Thou wouldst with thy speeches, have me thy servant made,
That, thou mayst rest assured, I should deeply rue;
Never again in friendship will I hold thee true."

Then wept the fair Brunhilda; Chriemhild delayed no more,
But into the Minster, she went, the Queen before,
And with her all her courtiers. Then rose a mighty hate—
Lovely eyes full many at this with tears were wet.

What of God's service was there in prayer or in song,
To the Lady Brunhild it lasted far too long.
Sorely troubled was she in spirit and in mood;
For this must soon perish many knights brave and good.

Brunhild with her ladies before the Minster stayed.
She thought: "With Chriemhild must there something more
be said

As to these reproaches of this sharp-tongued wife:
And if he has been boasting, it shall go near his life."

Then came the noble Chriemhild with all her knightly train.
Outspake the Lady Brunhild: "Now halt ye here again;
You have me concubined—let us the proofs now see:
Your words, as you must well know, have deeply injured me."

To her the Lady Chriemhild : "Why let you me not go ?
The proof is with this gold ring which on my hand I show.
That was by Siegfried brought me after he lay with you."
Ne'er before Brunhilda a day so bitter know.

She said : " This ring, so precious, stolen was from me,
And now for many years has been kept wickedly ;
I have at length discovered who the thief has been."
Now were both the ladies in grievous anger seen.

To her again spake Chriemhild : " No thief in this am I ;
Thou hadst best be silent, were thine honour dear to thee :
I'll prove it with this girdle, which does my body span,
I have not told you falsely ; Siegfried was your first man."

From robe of Eastern samite a girdle forth she drew
All set with rarest jewels, fair was it sooth to view.
This when saw Brunhilda to weep she did begin.
This must Gunther know of and all in his domain.

Then outspake the King's lady : " Now haste and send me here
The Monarch of the Rhineland. He too shall quickly hear
How his haughty sister has blackened o'er my life ;
She says before all people, that I am Siegfried's wife."

The King came with his Degen ; when he weeping saw
Brunhilda his beloved, kindly he spake to her :
" Tell me then, dear lady, what grieves you in this land ?"
Then to the King she answered : " Here must I joyless stand.

" Of my fairest honour, this your sister, fain
Would seek to deprive me ; to you I must complain :
She says I am the concubine of Siegfried her man."
Quick replied King Gunther : " Then she has badly done."

"She has here my girdle, which I so long did mourn
As lost, my gold ring also. That I was ever born
Must I now bewail me ; unless you can assure
Me from this shame, Sir King, I'll never love you more."

Then spake the Monarch Gunther : "Let Siegfried here attend,
If he thus has boasted, he must the same defend,
Or else he shall deny it, this hero of Netherland."
Then was the noble Siegfried quickly there at hand.

When the Degen Siegfried saw the angry pair,
And knew not of the reason, quickly he asked them there :
"Why do weep these women ? let some one me acquaint ;
And, Sirs, wherefore have ye to bring me hither sent ?"

To him replied King Gunther : "I find great trouble here ;
A story strange has told me Brunhild my wife so dear,
That thou, in sooth, hast boasted thou first as man her knew,
So says thy wife Chriemhild—Sir Knight, say is this true ?"

"Never," answered Siegfried, "and if she so has said
Rest again I will not, till she is sorely paid ;
Also, I will assever before your whole Court here,
With an oath most sacred, that I of this am clear."

Outspake the Rhine's Landlord : "Let it be so then,
The oath which thou hast proffered, shall at once be ta'en,
From anything that false is I do hold thee free."
Now in a circle gathered the knights of Burgundy.

Then, for his oath, Siegfried proffered his knightly hand.
Spake the wealthy Monarch : "Now do I understand,
That you herein are guiltless ; unsullied you are shown ;
That whereof Chriemhild charged you is to you unknown."

Then again spake Siegfried : " And if it be your thought,
That your beauteous lady she has to trouble brought,
That were to me, in good sooth, a sorrow deep and grave."
Then looked on each other the knights so keen and brave.

" Women should so be ruled," said the hero bold,
" That from idle gossip they may themselves withhold ;
Take now to task thy Lady, as I will mine the same.
In sooth such haughty prating brings me now much shame."

At these words had many fair dames drawn apart.
Then showed the Lady Brunhild such a sorrowing heart,
That with pity movèd were those in Gunther's train.
Now came Von Troneg Hagen and stood before the Queen.

He asked her what had happened, and why thus she wept ?
She told him of the story ; swift forth his promise leapt,
That on Chriemhild's husband he would have vengeance ta'en,
Or that amongst the revels he would ne'er be seen again.

While thus they spoke, came to them, Gernot and Ortwein ;
Both these heroes counselled that Siegfried should be slain.
With these came also Gunther, the child of Ute fair ;
When he heard what was plotting quick spake the true knight
there :

" Woe's me, ye brave Recken, wherefore do ye that ?
Siegfried has ne'er deserved such a mortal hate,
That he now should forfeit his body and his life ;
Sooth, there are things many, o'er which will storm a wife."

" Shall we draw dirty water ?" Hagen fierce replied,
" Therein would small honour to such brave knights betide.
That he should dare be boastful over my lady dear,
Rather will I perish if I have not vengeance here."

Then spake again the Monarch : " He has to us ne'er shown
Aught but love and honour ; let him then live on.
Why to the Recke should I foster such a hate ?
He has been faithful to us, willingly has he that."

Then outspake the Degen of Metz, Sir Ortewein ;
" All his mighty prowess shall save him not herein.
If leave my lords will give me, he shall suffer from my arm."
Thus, without cause, the Degen prepared to work him harm.

Nothing more was spoken, save that the Troneger
Used to whisper daily, into Gunther's ear :
" If Siegfried were not living you would Monarch reign
Over many countries." To grieve the King was fain.

They let the matter rest then, and took the lists anew.
Hei ! what spears to pieces by the Minster flew
Before the wife of Siegfried into the Hall within !
Thereby came into trouble many knights in Gunther's train.

Said the King : " Let cease now all this murderous hate,
For honour and for safety our debt to him is great ;
He is so strong and daring, the brave and gallant Knight,
Should he once suspect this, no one approach him might."

" Not yet," quoth Sir Hagen, " need you troubled be,
In quiet will I manage this right warily ;
Brunhilda's weeping shall yet work him woe ;
For ever will Hagen bare him hate enow."

Then spake the Monarch Gunther : " How can that well be ?"
For answer gave him Hagen : " That you shall shortly see ;
We will let some Envoys into this country ride,
Open war proclaiming, who are known to none beside.

HOW THE QUEENS RATED ONE ANOTHER.

“To your guests then publish, you will, with all your men,
Prepare you for the conflict. When he this has seen,
To help you he will offer ; that shall go near his life,
If I can learn the secret from the keen Recke's wife.”

Sadly the King followed what the Knight did say.
Then began to palter with guile and treachery,
Ere they were well conscious, these knights of high renown
Through these two dames' anger went many a hero down.

FIFTEENTH ADVENTURE.

The betrayal of Siegfried.

ONE saw, on the fourth morning, two and thirty men
Riding to the Palace ; there came tidings then
To the wealthy Gunther, that they meant war and strife.
The falsehood caused the women trouble sore and grief.

Permission they obtained to the Court to make their way,
Then said they, they were Envoys in King Lüdeger's pay,
He who had once been conquered by Sir Siegfried's hand.
And who by him was carried captive to Gunther's land.

The messengers he greeted and bade that they would sit.
One of them spake : " Sir Monarch, rather to stand is fit
While we the news make public, which should to you be shown.
Know that you have as foemen, many a mother's son.

" Opposed to you is Lüdegast, and also Lüdeger,
Whom you once did conquer with force of sword and spear ;
Now will they with an army ride into your land."
Wrathful seemed the Monarch when he this did understand.

They let the false Envoys to their quarters go.
How could Siegfried truly such web as this see through,
He or any other, so craftily 'twas spun ?
Yet was it to their own selves for mighty mischief done.

The King and all his kinsmen went whispering around :
From Von Troneg Hagen little peace he found.
Summoned now were many in the Monarch's pay ;
Yet could he not Hagen from his purpose away.

One day Siegfried noted the Degen whispering low.
Questioned them the hero if they would let him know,
Why so sadly wandered the King and all his train :
"To vengeance will I help you if of aught you do complain."

Then spake the Monarch Gunther : "Indeed my heart is sore ;
Lüdegast and Lüdeger threat me with strife and war.
With an armed leaguer they ride into my land."
Then said the stalwart Degen : "Well shall Siegfried's hand

"Oppose them with such prowess as your honour shall maintain,
As they before did fare once, so shall they fare again ;
I will lay waste their townships, and eke their country too,
Before I quit me of them : my life I'll stake to you.

"Do you and your Degen, tarry in this land,
And let me ride to meet them with my faithful band.
How willingly I serve you, let that now be seen ;
Small comfort shall your foemen get from me, I ween."

"That is welcome tidings," the King made reply,
As if he for this succour felt really hearty joy.
Lowly he bent in falsehood, the base and faithless one ;
Then spake the gallant Siegfried : "Your grief shall soon be
gone."

The servants now were bidden that they the road should take
With Siegfried and his comrades. This for appearance' sake.
Then to arms were summoned the men from Netherland ;
Soon they sought their armour, Siegfried's little band.

Then spake the sturdy Siegfried : "Siegmund, father mine,
Tarry in this country ; we will you quick rejoin,
Here upon the Rhine-beach, if God speed us on our way ;
With the King the meanwhile you can with pleasure stay."

To start they now were ready, their colours floated gay.
Many there were, in good sooth, in King Gunther's pay
Who knew not of the tidings, and why it happened so.
Camp-followers in plenty should with Siegfried go.

The helmets and the bucklers were on their horses stowed,
From the land would follow many stout knights and good.
Now went Von Troneg Hagen where Chriemhild sate apart,
He craved for her permission from the country to depart.

"Well for me," said Chriemhild, "that I a man did win,
Strong enough to succour my next and dearest kin,
As does my Lord Siegfried these three brothers mine ;
My heart may swell right proudly," said the lovely Queen.

"Dear friend Hagen, think this, I pray, well o'er,
I serve you so gladly, and to you hate no'er bore ;
So let me now also enjoy my well-loved man ;
For what I did to Brunhild, let him not atone.

"That have I rued already," spake the noble Queen,
"In sooth he so has punished with stripes this body mine
That I shall over sorrow and grumble at his mood :
He has it well avengèd, the Knight so keen and good."

"In a few days," he answered, "reconciled you will be.
Chriemhilda, dear Lady, I prythee tell to me,
How I best can serve him—Siegfried, your good Lord ;
He is so dear that, gladly, I would do it, be assured."

"I have no need for fearing," spake the noble wife,
"That any, in fair combat, should take his body or life ;
If he would not follow his over-haughty mood,
Safe he would be ever, the Knight so brave and good."

"If you are so anxious," Hagen then did say,
"Lest he should be wounded, now put your trust in me ;
How shall I be ready this danger to oppose ?
As guard will I be with him, wherever he rides or goes."

"Thou art my own kinsman, and so am I thine,
To thy care commend I this loved husband mine,
That thou wilt guard him safely, whom I hold so dear."
What she had best concealed, she trusted to him there.

She said : "Siegfried is daring, and also strong enow ;
When on the lonely mountain the Dragon fierce he slew,
In the blood he bathed him, the swift and ready Knight,
Thereby can no weapon injure him in the fight.

"Yet am I sorely troubled lest in the thick of blows,
When from hands of foemen many a spear's thrust goes,
I might chance to lose him, my own husband dear.
Hei ! what frequent sorrow must I for Siegfried bear !

"Dear friend, I tell thee, for thy true love's sake,
And that of thy firm fealty thou mayst fair proof make,
Where one yet may wound him, my beloved one ;
Of that I'll now acquaint thee, for thy favour it is done.

"As from the wounded Dragon flowed the warm life's blood,
And in the ruddy current bathed the Ritter good,
There fell upon his shoulder a broad linden leaf—
There can he be wounded, that brings me care and grief."

Then spake Von Troneg Hagen : "Have on his mantle sewn
Some little token for me, that thus it may be known
Where my guard must cover when in the battle's scathe."
She sought his life to lengthen and had insured his death.

She said : " With silken stitches upon his dress I'll sew
A little cross in secret ; there, hero, thou shalt know
To protect my good man when in the rush of blows,
And when in the battle he stands amidst his foes."

" That will I," quoth Sir Hagen, " dear lady mine."
That it would him profit thought the noble Queen
And yet Chriemhilda's husband did they thus betr
Leave now took Sir Hagen ; gladly he went his wa

What had he discovered ? his master bade him say :
" I will go on this journey, hunt will we on the way ;
Well know I now the secret how I can him kill.
Do you arrange the hunting ;" said Gunther, " That I will."

Blithe in mood and merry was the King's comrade now ;
Surely deed so wicked, no knight again will do
E'en to the end of all time as here was done, I ween,
When in his true fealty trusted the lovely Queen.

On the following morning, with a thousand Degen good,
Siegfried galloped forward in gay and cheery mood.
Vengeance he thought to compass for his friend's injury ;
So close to him rode Hagen that he his dress could see.

When he the sign discovered he despatched unseen—
Other news to carry—two from out his train :
To wit, in peace should tarry those in Gunther's land ;
For this purpose Lûdeger to the King did them send.

How loth then was Siegfried from fighting to abstain,
Till for his friend's insult vengeance he had ta'en !
Hardly they kept him quiet those in Gunther's pay.
Then rode he to the Monarch, who his thanks did say :

"Now may God reward you, my loved friend Siegfried,
That you were so willing to help me in my need,
For that will I repay you as I may fairly do,
Before all other kinsmen I lay my trust in you.

"Since, then, this hostile foray is for us now o'er,
So counsel I that we should hunt the bear and boar
In the Vosgan Forest, as I have often done."
This had counselled Hagen, the crafty faithless one.

"To all these my guests here the news now told shall be
That I will quickly forward ; those that will hunt with me
Let them soon be ready ; those that will stay behind
Let them amuse the ladies—that is now my mind."

With noble courteous bearing replied the hero true :
"If you will to the forest, so will I go with you ;
Only a bold huntsman you shall for me provide,
With a hound of mettle ; then to the wood I'll ride."

Quick the King rejoined, "Will you have but one ?
Four of them I'll give you, to whom are right well known
The wood and all the pathways where much game does hide,
That so 'neath forest banning you may not homeward ride."

Then went to his lady the stalwart Degen bold.
In the meantime had Hagen to King Gunther told
How he would destroy him, the noble hero brave :
Heart so base and faithless should man, in truth, ne'er have.

As these crafty Recken for his death thus wrought,
Known was it to the others. Geiselher and Gernot
Would not join the hunting ; I know not from what spite
They did not give him warning. This they atoned for quite.

SIXTEENTH ADVENTURE.

How Siegfried was slain.

GUNTHER and Hagen, those Knights of haughty ra
In their foul treason counselled this woodland chase
With their spears so pointed a-hunting they would
Bears, buffaloes, and boars, what braver could betide !

Then rode Siegfried with them in high-mettled mood.
Food of many kinds was brought them in the wood.
At a cold brook's margin he soon must lose his life ;
Brunhild had it counselled, the Monarch Gunther's wife.

Now went the stalwart Degen where Chriemhild sate alone
The costly hunting dresses were already sewn
For him and his companions ; they would across the Rhine
Chriemhild, in sadder spirit, could not, in sooth, have been

His wife so dear and trusty, to kiss he was full fain :
“ God grant me, my sweet one, to see thee safe again,
And that thou see me also ; with kind friends cheerily
Let the hours fly quickly ; I must away from thee.”

Then thought she of the story :—to him she dared not tell,
What she had told to Hagen ; began she then to wail,
The noble King's daughter, that ever she was born.
Tears she shed full many, the lovely wife forlorn.

She spake then to the Recke : " Give this hunting o'er ;
I dreamed last night of trouble, and how that two wild boar
Chased you thro' the thicket,—then were the flowers red.
That I must weep so sorely in sooth I have full need.

" Much do I fear and tremble for some foul treacherous plot.
Here are, in truth, full many whose anger has been hot,
Fiercely would they pursue us with cruel bitter hate ;
Stay then, my love Siegfried ; truly I counsel that."

" Sweet lady mine, I quickly will come back to thee ;
I know not that here any can hate or envy me.
All thy friends around us are to me also dear ;
Never have I deserved aught ill from them to bear."

" No, no, Siegfried, my loved one, I fear thy grievous fall ;
I dreamt last night of trouble, how on thee in the vale
Two mighty rocks fell over, and I saw thee no more ;
And if thou partest from me this will touch me sore."

He threw his arms so loving around his lady dear,
With many tender kisses he clasped her form so fair,
Then he said, " Farewell ! " and parted in that hour :
Alas ! she was to see him in life nevermore.

Then rode they quickly forward the forest deep within.
The hunting gladly followed many a Ritter keen,
Bent as were King Gunther and Siegfried on the sport.
Geiselher behind them remained with Gernot.

Many sumpter horses went before them o'er the Rhine.
To carry for the hunters good store of bread and wine,
Of meats and of fish plenty, and food of various kind,
Such as a rich King well may on his travels find.

Then to encamp they ordered beside the forest green
Before they roused the quarry, the gallant hunters keen,
From thence they first would follow over the pastures broad.
There, too, had ridden Siegfried ; this had Gunther heard.

Then from amongst the woodsmen the appointed band were told
Off, at both ends, as watchers ; said the hero bold,
Siegfried, the strong Degen : " Who guides us thro' this wood
To where the game is lying, ye Recken brave and good ? "

" Shall we then form parties," said the Troneger,
' Before we make beginning to hunt in forest here ?
So shall it, in good sooth, to all of us be known
Who for the best hunter in this woodcraft be shown.

" The beaters and boar-hounds between us we will share ;
Then let each hunter forward as he may prefer,
And he who is the best man to him our thanks we'll pay."
No longer did the hunters by one another stay.

Then spake the noble Siegfried : " Of a hound have I need,
Give me but one only, of such scent and speed
That he can track the quarry thro' the thickest wood ;
We shall have merry hunting ! " said the hero good.

Then chose a cunning huntsman a sleuth-hound from the lot,
And brought his noble masters quickly to the spot
Where they the game might follow as it was driven by ;
So hunted the companions as with the craft to-day.

Whatever the dog started that slew with his hand,
Siegfried the keen hunter, the hero of Netherland ;
His horse went so swiftly that little could from him run ;
. Much praise before all others he from the hunters won.

In everything he proved him a master of the craft,
Of the beasts the first one, whom he killed with his shaft,
Was a sturdy boar, him pinned he to the ground,
And again soon after the Knight a lion found.

Him when the dog had started he with an arrow slew,
Which, to the head well-drawn, from his bow swiftly flew ;
Three fierce springs could hardly make the lion then.
Great thanks from his comrades did the Knight thus gain.

A buffalo he slew next, and after that an elk,
Four sturdy bisons, and a grim old shelk,
His horse bore him so swiftly that naught escaped him there ;
Of hinds and stags also he had ample share.

A monster boar was driven forth then by the hound,
As to fly it turned there came on with swift bound
This same crafts-master ready for the fight ;
With sudden wrath the boar charged headlong at the Knight.

Then struck him with his weapon stout Chriemhilda's man ;
That would another hunter have not so lightly done.
The sleuth-hound then was tied up as he the boar cut down.
His hunting feats were quickly to the Burgundians known.

Then said the other huntsmen : " If it might be so,
Let us now, Sir Siegfried, some hunting prowess show :
To-day you well will empty wood and mountain too."
Thereat to laugh inclined the Knight so brave and true.

On all sides now resounded shouts and eager cries ;
Both from dogs and people so great a noise did rise
That all the woods and mountains did echo far and near.
Four and twenty boar-hounds the hunters loosened there.

Of wild game then many to their fate were driven ;
They thought they might escape it, but the death-blow was given,
Which is the hunter's guerdon : it could not other be,
As long as at the hunting strong Siegfried one could see.

The chase now was ended, yet not entirely so ;
They who sought their quarters brought with them, I trow,
The skins of many a quarry, and of wild game to spare.
Hei ! what store the servants did to the kitchen bear.

Now to the gallant huntsmen Gunther made it known
That he would to luncheon : then loud the horn was blown
With blast strong and lusty, so might each one know
That the noble Princes to their tent would go.

Then spake the hunter Siegfried : " Sire, I do hear
By this single horn-blast that we should now repair
To our meet : the which, I answer, suits me well."
The summons to the huntsmen a long-drawn blast did tell.

Then spake the King : " Sir Siegfried, now let us leave the wood."
His horse bore him smoothly, the others after rode.
Startled by the riders sprung a wild beast out—
It was a bear ; the hero quick to the rest did shout :

" Now for you, hunting comrades, some sport I will provide.
I see a bear yonder ; let go the dogs beside.
To our quarters with us shall Sir Bruin go :
He cannot well outrun us let him speed ever so."

The dogs they quickly loosed, then sprang the bear away ;
Chriemhild's husband sought to rescue him that day :
The bear fell in a chasm ; approach him they could not near :
The sturdy beast now reckoned from the hunters he was clear.

Then from his horse alighted the brave and haughty Knight,
And went in pursuit after—the bear was well in sight,
Nor could it then escape him ; he seized it with strong hand,
And without it wounding, quickly the brute he bound.

To scratch or else to bite him, it tried, but all in vain.
He bound it to the saddle ; upate the swift one then :
He brought it to the hunters in his fearless way,
Just for their amusement, the Knight so brave and gay.

In what gallant fashion he to the quarters rode !
Sturdy was his boar-spear, its point was strong and broad ;
A dainty weapon hung down even to his spur,
And a horn of red gold did the hero bear.

Of nobler hunting costume never have I heard say.
A coat of dark material he had on him that day,
And a hat of sable rich enough he wore.
Hei ! what a costly trimming he on his quiver bore.

For this had been despoiled the spotted panther's fur,
The softest near the parting. A bow, too, he did bear,
Which without a windlass could be drawn by none
Who should try to bend it, yet Siegfried had it done.

Of the skins of lynxes his hunting frock was made,
Which from crown to border was tastefully arrayed.
With the smooth fur mingled one might well behold
On the costly mantle much store of lace and gold.

At his side was Balmung, the sword so broad and fine ;
Sharp and trenchant was it, none could unscathed remain
On whose helm it lighted, bright was its face and good.
The hunter brave who bore it was well of haughty mood.

Now that to you this story may be fully told,
Many a goodly arrow did his quiver hold,
Tipped with golden feathers, hand-broad the point of steel :
Whoe'er by one was stricken his end not far must feel.

Then from out the forest rode the noble Knight.
Those in Gunther's party had him now in sight.
Quickly they ran to meet him, and held his bridle there ;
Tied had he to his saddle a fierce and grisly bear.

When he had dismounted he loosened quick the band
From his feet and muzzle ; the dogs which were at hand
Began a noisy howling when they saw the monster near.
The brute made for the forest ; many had of him fear.

The bear out of the clamour into the kitchen went ;
Hei ! how the cooks and scullions he from the fire sent !
Upset was many a kettle, brands were scattered round :
Hei ! what store of victuals were in the ashes found !

Then from their seats upstarted the Lords and all their train.
The bear began to anger ; the King gave orders then
To let slip all the boar-hounds which leashed around them lay :
And had it then been finished 'twould have been a joyous day.

With bows and with spears they quickly furnished were.
Swiftly they ran thither wherever went the bear ;
Yet would no one shoot him, so thick the dogs were round.
So great arose the clamour that the woods did resound.

Before the dogs so many the bear began to run ;
No one him could follow save Ohriemhild's Lord alone.
He chased him with his weapon, and to death slew him there.
To the fire the servants once more bore the bear.

Said all those who saw it, he was a man of might.
Then the noble huntsmen to lunch they did invite ;
On the mossy greensward seats enough were found.
Hei ! what dainty dishes to the guests were served around !

The cupbearers were tardy, they brought not any wine ;
Never yet did heroes deserve it more I ween.
Were it not that many of them so false could be,
So were well these Recken from all shame clear and free.

Then said the noble Siegfried : " Much do I wonder here
They bring us from the kitchen such store of goodly cheer ;
Why do the cupbearers not bring us wine also ?
Were this the use in hunting to the chase I ne'er would go.

" I have it well deserved if to please me they were bent."
Then from his table answered the King with false intent :
" Right soon they shall atone now for what we miss to-day ;
The fault lies with Sir Hagen, he would have us thirsty die."

Then spake Von Troneg Hagen : " Dear Lords mine,
I thought that the hunting this day would have been
In the Spechtsharte ; the wine I thither sent.
To-day there's naught for drinking ; in future I'll this prevent."

Replied the Netherlander : " Small thanks to you I'll bear ;
Seven sumpter horses, with mead and liquor clear,
One should have sent hither ; if that could not have been,
'Twould have been better had we camped nearer the Rhine."

Little did he dream then, the brave betrayèd one,
That against his life such a web was spun.
In his high virtue was he from all falsehood free ;
For his death must answer who from it no gain did see.

Then spake Von Troneg Hagen : " Friends and comrades dear,
Not far from where we're sitting I know a fountain clear ;
To save me from your anger I counsel there to go."
To many knights great sorrow this counsel brought, I trow.

Siegfried, the Recke, was driven by his thirst's need ;
He bade them move the table with all urgent speed. .
This fountain in the forest to seek he was full fain.
So was the crafty counsel of Sir Hagen ta'en.

They bade load up the quarry and bear it o'er the land,
That which had been taken by stout Siegfried's hand ;
Whoever should behold it ample praise would speak :
Hagen his good fealty to Siegfried basely brake.

As they now would go thence under the lindens broad,
Said Von Troneg Hagen : " I have ever heard
No one on foot can equal Lady Chriemhild's mate
When he to run is willing. Hei ! if we could see that ! "

To him answered quickly Siegfried the hero gay :
" That can soon be tested ; will you a wager lay
With me to the fountain ? If the race shall be,
He shall have won forsooth whom we as winner see."

" Well, let us make the trial," answered Hagen there.
Then spake the stalwart Siegfried : " I will lay me here,
Down at your feet reclining upon this grassy bed."
As he that did gather, King Gunther was right glad !

Then spake the stalwart Degen : " This more, too, will I dare ;
All my hunter's weapons will I with me bear,
My heavy spear and buckler, and all my gear around."
His sword and massive quiver quick on his limbs he bound

Straight then from their bodies their clothes they stripped off
there ;

In their white shirts of linen one saw them standing fair.
Like to two wild panthers thro' the grass they tore ;
At the fountain foremost they bold Siegfried saw.

The prize, in all things, surely, from many he had won.
He loosed then quick his weapons, his quiver laid he down,
His javelin so mighty he leaned against a tree ;
By the fountain's margin the brave knight you might see.

Siegfried's courteous bearing was both good and great,
His buckler adown laid he by the swift rivulet ;
Tho' he so sorely thirsted, he would not drink before
His host should first have drunken ; poor thanks he won there-
fore.

The little stream was limpid, cool and sparkling clear ;
Then did Gunther bend him down to the water there.
When he his thirst had quenched uprose he then again ;
So too had done gladly Siegfried the Degen keen.

His own turn was come now ; his bow and mighty sword
Hagen away did carry from the Degen o'er the sward ;
Then sprang he back so quickly where the javelin lay,
And sought in Siegfried's linen the fatal sign to see.

As the Degen Siegfried at the brooklet drank,
Through the cross he pierced him, that from the wound outsprang
His heart's blood, which sprouted high on Hagen's dress.
Never since has hero suffered such cruel stress.

In his breast the weapon deeply buried lay ;
Then in furious flight ran Hagen swift away,—
Never sure on earth had he before so run !
As now to strong Siegfried his fearful wound was known,

With a wild roar the hero from the brook upsprang ;
From his shoulders stood out a cruel spearstock long.
He thought to find beside him his bow or else his sword,
Then had he given Hagen in truth a grim reward.

When the death-wounded hero sword nor bow could find,
Naught else but his buckler then to him remained.
This from the brook he raised and after Hagen ran ;
Not e'en then outrun him could King Gunther's man.

Tho' to the death thus wounded, he struck so fiercely there
That from the shield was showered many a jewel rare
On the ground beneath them ; the shield then brake in two ;
Gladly would have avenged himself the hero true.

Under his hand was Hagen fallen on the plain ;
With the blows the woodland echoed loud again.
Had he in hand his good sword, Hagen his death had met.
His deadly wound now chafed him, his distress was great.

Wan was his face and pallid, stand he could no more.
All his strength so mighty of hand and limb was o'er,
Since that fatal token he on his dress did wear.
Bewept he was hereafter by many a lady fair.

So amongst the flowers fell Chriemhilda's man :
From his wound the warm blood streaming downwards ran.
He turned then to rebuke them in his cruel scathe,
Who with such foul treason had compassed thus his death.

Then cried the deadly wounded : " Woe to you, cowards there,
Is it for my service you have slain me here ?
I have been ever for you, and therefore now must die :
Foul wrong to your true friend have you done thereby,

"For this those shall answer who may to you be born
After this fatal hour. Your wrath has led you on
To take a cruel vengeance on my life this day,
With shame, from all true Degen, severed you shall be."

Around came all the Recken where he stricken lay :
It was to many of them in sooth a joyless day.
If there was truth in any, such did bewail him there :
This from all did merit the Knight beyond compare.

The King of Burgundy o'er his death did wail.
Then spake the dying hero : "Little can it avail
That o'er the wrong he sorrow by whom it was begun ;
Great reproach he merits, 'twere better left undone."

Then spake the grim Hagen : "I know not what you rue ;
Now at last our troubles have an end in view.
Left are there now not many who can us withstand ;
Glad am I that his power is ended by my hand."

"You may make easy boasting," spake Siegfried again.
"If this murderous temper I in you had seen,
Well had I known truly to keep both body and life.
I have on earth no sorrow, save for Chriemhild my wife.

"Also may God have pity, for I have a son,
To whom now for the future, the reproach will run
That his friends have some one treacherously slain ;
Had I time and leisure, of that would I complain.

"On this earth was never fouler murder known,"
Spake he to the Monarch, "than you on me have done:
Without reward I served you, in great stress and need ;
Badly you have repaid me for such worthy deed."

Yet further in his anguish spake the dying man :
" Would you ever, Gunther, on this world again
To any one show kindness, let it well appear,
In truth and in favour, to my wife so dear.

" Let it at least speak for her that she your sister is :
By every princely virtue pledge your troth in this !
For me now long may tarry my Father and his men :
Fouler deed in friendship ne'er before was seen."

He writhed in his anguish, compelled by cruel scathe,
And spake all faint and moaning, " This my murderous death
You may yet live to rue in the years that remain—
In good truth, believe me, ye have yourselves too slain."

The flowers all around him were with his heart's blood wet ;
Then with death he wrestled. No longer did he that,
For the fatal weapon cut too keenly through.
Soon lay dead before them, the Knight so brave and true.

Of this very fountain where Siegfried dying lay,
You shall the true story hear from me this day.
By Obenwalde nestles the village of Odenheim,
There does the brooklet wander, that is the very stream.

When the lords now saw that the knight was dead,
On a shield they laid him that was of gold red :
Then counselled they together how it might be so
That it should rest concealed that Hagen struck the blow.

Some of them then answered : " A mischance here befell ;
That must we all keep secret, and but one story tell :
How he alone went riding to hunt, Chriemhilda's man ;
As thro' the wood he galloped he was by robbers slain."

Sprang up Von Troneg Hagen : " Leave it to me alone :
Little do I reck if it to her be known,
Who Brunhilda's quiet did so disturb of late ;
Question, I shall not greatly, of her tears or state."

They tarried there that evening, then over Rhine they went ;
Such a foul day of hunting by heroes ne'er was spent.
Bewept was their booty, by many a noble wife,
For this one death must perish many a worthy life.

SEVENTEENTH ADVENTURE.

How Siegfried was bewailed and buried.

Of gross and wanton insult, a tale ye now shall hear,
And of horrid vengeance. Hagen bade them bear
The murdered corpse of Siegfried, the Nibelungen Knight,
Before a Kemenatē, where Chriemhild passed the night.

He made them lay the body in secret by the stair,
Where she needs must find it when she forth should fare
To her early matins, ere the day did dawn,—
In this the Lady Chriemhild seldom failed at morn.

Then, as of old, broke silence the Minster chiming deep ;
Aroused the lovely Chriemhild many a maid from sleep.
A light she bade them bring her and her raiment fair ;
Then came there one who stumbled o'er Siegfried lying there.

He saw him gashed and bloody—all his dress was wet ;
That it was his master in truth he knew not yet.
With his torch uplifted the room he entered there :
Soon must the Lady Chriemhild the evil tidings hear.

As she with her maidens to church would take her way,
“ Lady,” said the servant, “ you must here longer stay ;
Before the door there lieth, a knight, all stricken dead.”
“ O woe is me,” said Chriemhild, “ why bringst such tidings
dread ?”

Before she yet had knowledge that 'twas her own loved man,
Upon Hagen's question to ponder she began,
"How he might protect him!" her woe she then foresaw,
With his death was banished all joy for evermore.

he sank down on the ground, no word more did she say;
The lovely, joyless lady before them prostrate lay.
Chriemhilda's anguish was terrible to view,
So loud her cries and wailing that the rooms echoed through.

Then spake to her the servants: "Is it haply some strange man?"
With her grief, the heart-blood from her mouth outran;
"No, no," she cried, "'tis Siegfried, my own beloved one,
Brunhild has it plotted, and Hagen has it done!"

She let them lead her thither where the hero lay,
With her white hands his body so fair uplifted she.
Tho' he with blood was covered, she knew him at first sight;
There to her bitter anguish lay the Nibelungen Knight.

Then in wailing accents cried loud the gentle Queen:
"Woe, woe at this treason! Now has thy shield ne'er been
Bruised with honest weapons; this is a murderer's blow.
Knew I who it had given, he should my vengeance know."

All her gentle maidens wept and cried aloud
With the loving lady: bitterly she rued
Her noble husband's murder, who now was lost to her.
Foully thus had Hagen revenged Brunhilda's ire.

Then spake the grief-bound Lady: "Now let some one go
In hot haste and wake me Siegfried's followers true;
To them and to King Siegmund you shall my trouble tell,
That they thus may help me, my brave Knight to bewail."

Then ran a servant quickly, where he them sleeping found,—
Siegfried's gallant Recken from the Nibelung land.
At his mournful message how soon their joy was o'er ;
Believe it yet they would not, till they the weeping saw.

The messenger came also, where lay Siegmund the King ;
Little sleep in truth did that night to him bring ;
His heart had well foreboded what the end would be,⁴
And that his son Siegfried he never more should see.

“Wake up, noble Siegmund ! I have been sent to you
By my Lady Chriemhild ; she has had a blow
Which, beyond all others, her heart has sorely torn ;
This you shall help in sharing, for you too it does concern.”

Upraised himself King Siegmund ; “For what then does she
wail,
The lovely Chriemhilda,—of what grief dost thou tell ?”
Then spake the servant weeping : “The sad tale must be told ;
There without lies murdered Siegfried the hero bold.”

Then outspake King Siegmund : “Let this jesting be,
And such evil tidings, for the love of me !
And see no more thou tellest that he has been slain ;
Then in sooth I never should know joy again.”

“And will you not believe me in this mournful tale ?
So you yourself may listen to Chriemhilda's wail,
And that of all her maidens over Siegfried's death.”
Terrified then was Siegmund, cruel was his scathe.

With of his men a hundred from the bed he sprung,
In their hands they grasped their weapons sharp and long ;
To where they heard the weeping, full of grief, they ran.
Then came a thousand Recken of brave Siegfried's train.

When in tones of anguish they heard the women wail,
Many then amongst them grew with sorrow pale.
Such their trouble, that they were as of sense bereft ;
Their hearts were so heavy, no joy to them was left.

Then came King Siegmund where Chriemhild still remained.
He said : " Woe for our journey hither to this land !
Who has from you your husband, from me my only child,
Thus murderously taken, while friends around us smiled ? "

" If I only knew that," the Queen made swift reply,
" Little love he ever should receive from me ;
All his friends, in good sooth—such vengeance would I take—
Should a cruel sorrow suffer for my sake."

Siegmund, the good Monarch, fondly embraced his son ;
Then by his friends surrounding such bitter grief was shown,
That with the loud wailing echoed Palace and Hall,
And Worms' haughty city resounded over all.

For brave Siegfried's widow, comfort was there none ;
From his fair body, his raiment now was drawn,
His wounds then they washed, and laid him on a bier ;
What grief from his people mourning might one hear !

Then out spake the Recken from Nibelungen land :
" Always to revenge him ready will we stand,
He who has done this murder must in this place be."
Then for their weapons hasted those in Siegfried's pay.

Back came the sturdy warriors with their shields so bright,
Eleven hundred Recken, who in war did fight
For Siegmund the rich Monarch ; for the murder of his son
Fain would he have vengeance as his heart urged him on.

They knew not yet what foemen they should seek to slay,
Unless it was King Gunther and those in his pay,
With whom the Degen Siegfried to the hunting rode.
Chriemhild saw them armed ; more trouble she forebode.

How great soe'er her sorrow, how terrible her pain,
She was yet so fearful the Nibelungen would be slain
By her brother's Recken, that she to stay them strove ;
She warned them of the danger as friend does friend in love.

Then spake the tearful Lady : " Siegmund, my loved King,
What are you now beginning ? Consider well this thing :
Here are with King Gunther many a stalwart knight ;
They would destroy you surely if you with them did fight."

With uplifted weapons they cried for strife amain.
The noble King's daughter prayed and prayed again
That these armed Recken they would keep apart ;
She would not leave it doubtful, so fearful was her heart.

She spake : " My Lord Siegmund, let this now sleeping lie
Till better chance shall offer, my husband then will I
To revenge assist you. He that has done this wrong,
Let me but him discover, shall not escape me long.

" There are of haughty warriors many here on Rhine,
With whom I would not counsel you should in combat join ;
They would have against us as thirty men to one :
May God yet make them suffer for what they now have done.

" Remain here in this palace with me this grief to share,
Till we see the daybreak, ye knights of courage rare ;
Then help me in the ground my dear-loved Lord to lay."
Answered her the Degen : " Dear Lady, so it shall be."

An end could no one tell you of the bitter rue
Of the knights and ladies ; how their trouble grew,
Till the sound of weeping was heard thro' all the town.
The worthy burghers also hastened to come down.

They sorrowed with the strangers, their loss they did bemoan.
What had chanced to Siegfried was to them unknown,
Or why the noble Recke had lost body and life.
Wept too with the ladies many a good man's wife.

Smiths they called in quickly a coffin to procure,
Wrought of gold and silver, of mighty strength and sure,
And bade it should be bounden in steel as it seemed good.
Then were all the people troubled sore in mood.

The night now was over ; they said : " The day is here."
Then bade the noble Lady to the Minster bear
Siegfried her Lord, her dear-loved husband true.
Alone with her went weeping those whom as friends she knew.

As they the Minster neared how many bells were rung !
On all sides was sounding many a sacred song.
Then came the Monarch Gunther, and with him all his train,
And also the grim Hagen—absence had wiser been.

Spake Gunther : " My dear sister, we grieve over your woe,
In this your cruel trouble you must not singly go !
Ever must we be mourners at Siegfried's loss of life."
" Therein ye do speak falsely," said the sorrowing wife.

" If that to you brought trouble it would ne'er have been.
You did well forget me that is surely seen,
When I late was parted from my husband dear.
Would to God in heaven you had slain me there."

They made as 'twere denial. Chriemhild then spake on :
" Who in this is guiltless it can well be shown ;
Let him to the bier now before the people go,
So that on this spot here the real truth we may know."

There is a mighty wonder that has oft been tried :
If one let the murderer stand the corpse beside,
The wound will burst a-bleeding as at first had been ;
Then that the crime was Hagen's was all clearly seen.

The wounds broke out a-bleeding as they had done before ;
Those who wailed so loudly now wept again still more.
Then spake the Monarch Gunther : " The truth will I make
known :
Siegfried was slain by robbers ; 'twas not by Hagen done."

" Yes, and those robbers," said she, " are well known to me ;
That God will grant me vengeance by his friend's hands I pray !
Gunther and Hagen, ye have this well done."
Then drew again their weapons the knights in Siegfried's train.

But again spake Chriemhild : " Suffer this grief with me."
Then also came her brothers, where Siegfried dead did lie,
Gernot the brave Recke, and the young Geiselher ;
In all truth they mourned him, their eyes showed many a tear.

In their hearts they grieved for Chriemhilda's man.
Masses now were chanted. Into the Minster then
They all went together, knights and ladies fair.
E'en those who took it lightly wept o'er Siegfried there.

Geiselher and Gernot spake then : " Sister mine,
Take comfort in this sorrow, since it so has been ;
What we can do will we, so long as we both live."
Byt yet on earth knew no one comfort to her to give.

His coffin was preparèd and ready at noonday ;
They took him from the bier on which the body lay,
Not yet would Chriemhilda let him buried be :
At this the people's sorrow was piteous to see.

In rich and costly linen they wrapped the body round.
In very truth could no one tearless there be found.
With all her heart mournèd Ute the noble Queen,
And all of her companions, o'er the brave Ritter keen.

When the people knew now that hymns were being sung,
Around the coffined body great was the crush and throng ;
For his soul's sake what costly offerings did flow !
He had amongst his foemen yet good friends enow.

Then spake poor Chriemhilda to her chamberlain :
" You shall for my love's sake see this trouble ta'en :
Those who well do wish him, and who for me do care,
For Siegfried's soul now let them their gold with all these share."

There was no child so little, let him but knowledge have,
Who did not bring an offering ere they laid him in the grave.
Of masses, well, a hundred on that day were sung ;
Of Siegfried's friends were present indeed a mighty throng.

When the chants were ended the crowd went one by one.
Then spake the Lady Chriemhild : " Leave me not alone
To keep watch the morrow o'er my chosen Knight ;
Here, with his body, all my joy is buried quite.

" Three days and three nights will I stay watching here,
That I may feed my longing for my husband dear.
Perchance may grant the good God that I too might die :
So were then well ended poor Chriemhild's misery."

All the townspeople now for their quarters made.
The priests and the monastics to stay awhile they prayed,
And all the Knight's companions in the hero's train :
Nights and days full weary to spend there they were fain.

From meat and drink all fasting, remained full many there.
Those who in this joined not were made well aware
That they could have ample ; for that cared King Siegmund.
The Nibelungen heroes bitter trouble found.

In those three long watches, as we the tale do hear,
Must, with the Lady Chriemhild, much of sorrow bear,
Those who to sing were able. What offerings were seen !
They who were poor beforehand grew rich enough, I ween.

Where any were found wanting who had not much to bring,
They let them with the red gold make some offering
Out of their own chamber : to live he had no need
For whose soul, in this way, so many marks were paid.

The good fruits of the garden were offered all around
To all who in the convent or present there were found.
Clothes enough and silver were given to the poor.
She let it well be proven what love to him she bore.

On the third morning, when the mass bell was heard,
There before the Minster the spacious churchyard broad
Full of people weeping and wailing one might see :
In his death they served him, as with dear friends should be.

In those four days lying, says the ancient lore,
Marks, full thirty thousand, or even many more,
For his soul's salvation they to the poor did give.
Thus away had passed his beauty and his life.

When the service ended hushed was the chanting too,
With a mighty sorrow the crowd was stricken through.
Then from out the Minster to the grave they did him bear ;
Nothing else but weeping and wailing one could hear.

In loud lamentation the people all did join :
Mirthful saw one no one, neither wife nor man.
Ere he was interred prayers were read and sung.
Hei ! what worthy deacons went with the crowd along !

As to the grave tottered Siegfried's wife forlorn,
With a grief so cruel was her true heart torn,
That oft from the fountain they brought her water there .
Truly her heart's sorrow was more than she could bear.

It was indeed a wonder how she the day got through.
In her mourning helped her many a lady true.
Then spake the royal widow : " Ye in Siegfried's train,
I pray you by your fealty do me this kindness then.

" Let me in my sorrow one little favour share,
That I may but once more see his face so fair."
This, with sad entreaty, she prayed and prayed again,
Till the closed coffin to open they were fain.

They brought then the poor Lady where Siegfried did lie ;
With her white hands raised she the dear face silently,
And on the mouth she kissed him, the noble Ritter good :
From her eyes so lovely for sorrow she wept blood.

A right piteous parting sadly then one saw.
Away they then did lead her, walk she could no more.
Of all sense bereaved they found the noble wife :
For very grief she would have ended her fair life.

When the noble Degen had thus buried been,
In great stress of trouble were the heroes seen
Who with him had journeyed from the Nibelung land :
Siegmund, too, the Monarch, had woe enough at hand.

Many there were amongst them who for long days three
From meat and drink had fasted, so great their misery ;
Then what their bodies needed they could withhold no more :
They from their grief recovered as many have before.

As in a trance, Chriemhilda still and powerless lay
The evening and the night long, and into the next day.
Whatever one might whisper it was unknown to her ;
In like trouble also King Siegmund did appear.

Hardly to restore him to his mind they did succeed,
With such bitter sorrow had all his powers fled.
This was little wonder. Then spake to him his men :
“ Sire, you should homewards ; here come we ne’er again.”

EIGHTEENTH ADVENTURE.

Siegmund returns home.

SIEGMUND the good Monarch sought out Chriemhilda then :
And to the Lady said he : " Let us home again :
Guests unwelcome are we, methinks, here on the Rhine.
Go with us to our country, Chriemhild, dear daughter mine.

" Though in this land of strangers ourselves bereaved we see
Of your noble husband, through foul treachery,
For that you shall not suffer : true heart to you I'll bear,
For sake of my poor son and for his child so dear.

" Also shall you, Lady, rule with all the might
With which you were invested by Siegfried the brave Knight.
The land and the crown likewise to you shall appertain ;
And willingly shall serve you the knights in Siegfried's train."

That they away would journey was to the grooms soon said :
Then saw one for the horses a hasty scramble made ;
In such a hostile country to tarry loth they were ;
Dames and maids were seeking for their travelling gear.

When now the Monarch Siegmund would ride upon his way,
Oft did Chriemhild's mother of her daughter pray,
That she with her kinsmen in that land would bide.
Then spake the joyless one : " Hardly can that betide :

"How could I endure it, to see always near me one
Who to me, poor widow, such cruel wrong has done?"
Then spake the young Geiselher: "Dear sister mine,
Here shalt thou on thy true friends and on thy mother lean.

"Those who thine heart have troubled, and thy life have clouded
o'er,
Their services thou needst not, thou wilt live on my store."
She answered then the Degen: "That can never be;
I should die with sorrow if I did Hagen see."

"Never shall he cross thee, much-loved sister dear,
Dwell shalt thou ever with thy brother Geiselher.
For thy husband's death I will thus best atone."
"Sore need of that has Chriemhild," replied the joyless one.

While now thus her brother spake so lovingly,
Ute and Gernot began also to pray
With all her friends so trusty that she would there remain:
Few kinsmen had she truly amongst Siegfried's train.

"To you they are all strangers," Prince Gernot spake so;
"How strong soe'er the one was, death has laid him low.
Consider now, dear sister, and be comforted in mood:
Remain here with your brothers—this counsel is right good."

She promised then to Geiselher that she would there remain.
The horses now were ready for those in Siegmund's train;
As for the Nibelung country they would ride away;
Then on the steeds were laden their arms and trappings gay.

Now went the Monarch Siegmund where Chriemhild did stand,
And to the Lady spake he: "They of Siegfried's band
Wait now by the horses, let us forward ride,
Loth am I, in all sadness, here in Burgundy to abide."

Replied the Lady Chriemhild : " My friends have counselled me,
The best friends that I have now, that I with them should stay ;
In the Nibelung country of kin I have but few."

Sorely grieved was Siegmund when this her wish he knew.

Then replied King Siegmund : " Who tells you that does err :
Before all those my subjects the crown you still shall wear
In right royal fashion, as before has been :
In this you shall not suffer tho' you have lost your man.

" To your home and child pray you with us return :
So shall he not an orphan for you, Lady, mourn.
When your son is grown up, comfort will he your mood ;
In the meantime will serve you many Degen keen and good."

Then spake she : " King Siegmund, I cannot with you ride ;
I must here remain, let what will betide,
By my trusty kinsmen, who will help me in my woe."
These tidings brought the good knights little joy, I trow.

With one voice then spake they : " This is, in very deed,
For us the greatest trouble that we as yet have had,
That you in this country should with your foes remain ;
Never yet have heroes their pride more humbled seen."

" You shall without sorrow forth in God's name go :
Take shall you trusty escort the safe way to show
To your land returning ; for my child so dear
To you, brave Recken, do I now commend him here."

When they now perceived that she would there remain,
Then wept all the Degen in King Siegmund's train.
With what heartfelt sorrow did Siegmund then say
Farewell to Chriemhilda ! sorely he rued that day.

"Woe to this high feasting !" spake the Monarch then .
"A prince and his retainers will never brave again,
In pursuit of pleasure, what we here have borne :
We in sooth shall never to Burgundy return."

Then to him quick answered the knights in Siegfried's train :
"Well might we yet journey into this land again, '
If we could but discover who struck our Lord the blow :
Amongst his friends they number many a stalwart foe."

He kissed the Lady Chriemhild ; sadly he spake to her
When of her firm purpose to stay he was aware ;
"In joy we must then bankrupt to our land return :
My lesson of deep sorrow I must begin to learn."

Without an escort rode they from Worms to Over-Rhine.
They might well in spirit full of trust remain
That should they be assailed by any hostile band,
They would be well defended by the brave Nibelung hand.

There was no leave-taking as they went their way.
Then saw one how Geiselher and Gernot lovingly
To the knights drew nearer—much grieved they at the wrong :
They let this well be noted, the heroes brave and strong.

Then spake to King Siegmund, Gernot with courteous grace :
"Knows well God in heaven that I am quite guiltless
Of brave Siegfried's murder. To me did none e'er tell
Whom he had here for foeman : him must I sore bewail."

A good companion found they in the young Geiselher.
He brought them without troubles, save those their grief did wear,
The King and all his Degen, to Netherland again ;
Amongst their kin what little joy could there be seen ;

How it with them fared I have no words to say.
One heard the Lady Chriemhild cry to her latest day
That no one how to comfort her heart and spirit knew
Except the young Prince Geiselher : he was so good and true.

Brunhilda the lovely kept on her haughty way ;
Let Chriemhilda weep her fill, little of that recked she !
For her, love or friendship she never more would know.
Soon was she brought by Chriemhild also to bitter woe.

NINETEENTH ADVENTURE.

How the Ribelungen Board came to Worms.

WHEN the noble Chriemhild was thus a widow made,
With her in that country the Margrave Eckewart stayed ;
With his staff of servants he served her all the year.
And helped his Lady often to mourn her husband dear.

At Worms beside the Minster there stood a Castle fair,
Broad and rich and roomy, this they gave to her ;
Here with all her maidens the joyless Lady sate.
To the church went she gladly—with great fervour did she that.

Where her love lay buried how many an hour she spent !
Every day she knelt there with a sad content.
And for his soul's welfare to the good God she prayed ;
What true tears for her hero those loving eyes did shed !

Dame Ute and her kinsmen to her were ever kind ;
Yet her heart sore wounded little peace could find.
Whate'er they said in kindness no comfort came to her.
Such a longing had she for her husband dear.

Her constancy so faithful one could see well therein,
Such as before ne'er Recke from loving wife did win.
To the last she mourned him until she lost her life :
Soon took she fearful vengeance, the noble Siegfried's wife.

She dwelt thus with her sorrow, as you shall truly hear,
After her husband's murder until the fourth year,
And yet by her to Gunther had no word spoken been,
Nor had she her foe Hagen in all that time once seen.

Then spake Von Troneg Hagen : " If it now could be
That to you your sister we could more friendly see,
To this land might journey the Nibelungen gold ;
Much wealth you then would gather if the Queen loved us as of
old."

" In sooth and we will venture," said the Monarch great ;
" Gernot and Geiselher shall for us entreat,
Until perchance it happen she may us with favour see."
" I believe not," said Hagen, " that it will ever be."

He begged then of Sir Ortwein to the Queen to go ;
Also the Margrave Gexe. When it befell so
They summoned also Gernot and the young Geiselher ;
They then approached Chriemhilda with kind and friendly air.

Then outspake brave Gernot, the Prince of Burgundy :
" For the loss of Siegfried you grieve too long, Lady.
The King will give you voucher he was not by him slain ;
We hear you at all hours yet so bitterly complain."

She said : " No one has charged him ; by Hagen's hand he fell :
Where he could be wounded that I to him did tell.
How could I have forgotten that he bore him such hate ?
I should," said the poor Lady, " have well avoided that."

" Had I not of his body made the secret known
I might now quit my weeping—I the unhappy one !
Dear to me shall be never he who this deed did do !"
Then to implore 'gan Geiselher, the Knight so brave and true.

She said : " I must then greet him, ye are too strong for me,
But the offence lies with you : he has made me see
All this cruel grief without fault of mine ;
My mouth gives him forgiveness, my heart will cold remain."

" Things will now go better," her friends together spake.
" Perchance it yet may happen that she some pleasure take."
" He may well make atonement," spake Gernot the true.
Then answered the grief-stricken : " I will your bidding do.

" I will greet the King." When he that did hear,
With his chosen comrades the Monarch came to her.
Not yet did Hagen venture himself to her to show ;
Of guilt he was too conscious. He had wrought her bitter woe.

As she her hate for Gunther would seek now to forget,
That he then should kiss her seemed to him only fit ;
It was not by his willing that this crime was done ;
So with bold heart need he ne'er Chriemhilda shun.

With such loving tears never has wrong again
Happened amongst kinsmen—great cause had she to plain ;
Yet she could forgive them—all excepting one :
Siegfried had ne'er been murdered had Hagen not it done.

Soon it came to pass, so they prevailed by word,
That the Lady Chriemhild took the mighty Hoard
From the Nibelung country and brought it to the Rhine :
It was her marriage portion, and did her own remain.

For the Hoard despatched were Geiselher and Gernot.
Fourscore hundred Degen were by Chriemhild besought,
That they thence would fetch it where it hidden lay,
And Alberich and his Recken guarded it faithfully.

As they for the treasure were seen coming from the Rhine,
To his friends around him spake Alberich the keen :
" We cannot in all fairness the Hoard from her withhold,
Since, as her marriage portion, the Queen demands the gold.

" Yet should it truly never," quoth Alberich, " thus be,
But that we in sorrow were forced the loss to see,
Through the hero Siegfried, of the cloud-cap rare,
The which ever after Chriemhild's husband bare.

" Now has it with Siegfried, alas ! badly gone,
The Knight who the Tarnkappe from our keeping won,
So that all the country must his will obey."
Then went the Treasurer where he found the key.

Now before the mountain stood Chriemhilda's band,
And many of their comrades : they let the Hoard by hand
Down to the sea be carried to where the good ships stood,
Then to the Rhine City bore it o'er the flood.

Now of this Hoard truly you may wonders hear,
Twelve double waggons scarcely could it bear
In four days and nights from out the mountain cave,
And yet on every day the road thrice driven have.

Of naught else was it also but precious stones and gold,
And if one had the whole earth bought with a sum untold,
The treasure would have seemed to be in nothing less.
To covet this had Hagen good right we must confess.

The " wishing charm" lay under,—a little rod of gold ;
He who that had discovered might as master hold
All the wide world over power above every man.
Of Alberich's friends went many with Gernot back again.

When the Prince Gernot and the young Geiselher
Had the Hoard thus mastered they became rulers there
Over the land and cities, and o'er each stalwart knight ;
All must obey and serve them thro' fear and force of might.

Now when the Hoard was carried into King Gunther's land,
And of it Chriemhilda the mastery had gained,
The chambers and the towers were as full as they could bear ;
Never before of treasures could one such wonders hear.

And had the wealth been greater, aye, a thousandfold,
And she the Degen Siegfried might but standing there behold,
Blithe had she gone with him tho' stripped to her shift alone.
Never before had hero such a true wife won.

As she had now the treasure, one saw coming to the land
Many a stranger Recke, freely gave her hand,
So that such great kindness ne'er before was known.
She practised noble virtues, that they all must own.

Alike to rich and poor to give she then began.
Said Hagen to King Gunther : " Let this but go on
For yet a little longer, she will have in her pay
So many sturdy Degen that we shall rue the day."

Then spake the Monarch Gunther : " The wealth belongs to her ;
Whate'er she may do with it how can I interfere ?
Hardly can I be hopeful that she me dear should hold ,
I ask not how she shareth her jewels and her gold."

Said Hagen to the Monarch : " A wise man would ne'er
Such a Hoard as this is trust to a woman's care ;
With her gifts she will soon bring about a day
When your bold Burgundians may have the deuce to pay."

Then spake the Monarch Gunther : " An oath to her I swore,
That any wrong from my hand she should never suffer more,
To that will I keep me, she is my sister dear."

Then again spake Hagen : " Leave me the blame to bear."

Keep they did but badly the oath which once they swore :
They plundered the poor widow of her mighty store ;
The keys got Sir Hagen into his power alone :
Wrathful was Prince Gernot when this to him was known.

Then spake the Degen Geiselher : " A great wrong is at hand,
Thro' Hagen to my sister, that will I withstand ;
Were he not my cousin I would take his life."
A fresh burst of weeping came then from Siegfried's wife.

Said the princely Gernot : " Or ever we such pain
From this gold do suffer we will, in the Rhine,
Sink it altogether, its power will then be spent."
Then with mournful gesture to Geiselher she went.

She said : " Dear brother, you must take care of me,
And of my life and riches you shall the guardian be."
Then answered her young Geiselher : " Well, it shall be so
When we return again here ; a journey now we go."

Gunther with his comrades soon left the town behind,
He had of these the bravest that one e'er could find.
Hagen alone remained wrapped in the steadfast hate
Which he for Chriemhild cherished ; to her hurt did he that.

Before the wealthy Monarch had returned again,
By the crafty Hagen was the treasure ta'en ;
He had it close by Lockheim deep sunken in the Rhine.
He thought some day to use it—that day has never been.

The Princes now returned, and with them many a man.
Of this great wrong Chriemhilda to complain began,
With her maids and women ; they had good cause for ruth.
Ready was Prince Geiselher to serve her in all truth.

With one voice exclaimed they : " Hagen has wrongly done."
Until he the Princes again to friendship won
He bent before their anger, they left him to come round ;
A fiercer foe than Chriemhild could he ne'er have found.

Before Von Troneg Hagen had sunk the treasure there,
An oath stern and mighty they had joined to swear,
That it should be hidden as long as she might live ;
Thus could she neither use it nor to others give.

Thus with a fresh sorrow her heart was clouded o'er ;
First of her dear husband and now of all her store,
She had been quite bereaved : until her latest day
While her life yet lasted no rest her grief should see.

After Siegfried's murder, as the tale does run,
She dwelt for thirteen years in her great grief alone,
Her Hero's death did ever in her fond heart dwell ;
She was to him so faithful, of that they all must tell.

A rich and royal Abbey founded Ute the Dame
After Dankrat's death, from her own wealth it came,
With revenues all princely which it has still in hand,
Hard by Lorsch stands the cloister, high honour it does command.

On this had Chriemhild also spent much of her wealth,
For sake of Siegfried's soul and for All-Souls' health,
Gold and precious jewels right freely gave the Queen ;
Truer wife on this earth there has been seldom seen.

Since to King Gunther Chriemhild had again kindness shown,
And yet thro' his conspiring the Hoard's loss she had known,
The anguish of her spirit ever deeper grew ;
Gladly she had gone thence, the noble wife and true.

Now was for Dame Ute a residence prepared
At Lorsch near her cloister, rich and great and broad ;
There parted from her children, she withdrew from curious eyes,
And there the noble Queen still in her coffin lies.

Then spake the royal widow : " Dear daughter mine,
Here thou must not tarry, with me thou shalt remain
At my house in Lorsch, there thou mayst cease to grieve."
Chriemhilda made answer : " How could I Siegfried leave ? "

" Let him still remain here," spake Dame Ute then.
" Never by God's will," replied the pious Queen,
" From that will I guard me ever, mother dear,
No, he shall journey with me wheresoe'er I fare."

Her tears so prevailed that his bones were ta'en
From their place of resting, and were laid again
At Lorsch by the Minster with many a holy rite ;
There in his long coffin lies yet the noble Knight.

'Twas at this very time now when Chriemhilda should
Have gone to her mother, as to her seemed good,
And yet it did not happen. She must there still remain ;
This was through fresh tidings which came o'er the Rhine.

TWENTIETH ADVENTURE.

King Etzel sends to Chriemhilda.

ABOUT this time it happened that Queen Helke died,
And the Monarch Etzel sought another bride ;
Him his friends then counselled to look to Burgundy,
To a royal widow, Chriemhild, so named was she.

When Helke lay a-dying to the King she said :
" If you again are seeking a noble wife to wed,
The highest and the fairest that monarch e'er did gain,
Then take the Lady Chriemhild ; strong Siegfried was her man."

Then spake the wealthy Etzel : " How could that well be ?
Still a heathen monarch and unbaptized am I,
And she is a Christian ; her hand I ne'er could claim.
'Twere indeed great wonder if she hither came."

To whom his friends swift answered : " She might do it yet,
For your name so mighty and your wealth so great.
Let the quest be followed with this noble Queen ;
It would well become you her lovely form to win."

Then spake the noble Monarch : " Who of ye best does know
This people on the Rhine-beach and the land also ?"
Whom answered good Sir Rüdeger, Knight of Bechlaren :
" From childhood with their Princes have I in friendship been.

"Gunther and Gernot—noble knights are they ;
The third is Geiselher. Of each you well may say,
In all of highest usage and virtue he'll be found ;
In these, too, did their grandsires ever much abound."

Then again spake Etzel : " Friends, now let me hear,
Whether in this country the crown she well may bear.
And if so great her beauty as report does tell.
True friends have I many who have served me well."

" In her beauty she is like to my late Ladye,
Helke the Queen so wealthy ; none fairer could there be
Over all the kingdom to stand a very Queen ;
He who as wife shall win her may be content, I ween.

" And know too, noble Etzel, putting thyself aside,
She to the best of Degen, Siegfried, was a bride,
Son of the Monarch Siegmund ; thou hast seen him here :
Honour of the greatest he might truly share."

To whom replied King Etzel : " Was she the Recke's wife ?
Then was the noble Degen dear to her as life ;
So that from us the lady no disdain need fear ;
Of her wondrous beauty I am well pleased to hear."

He spake : " Then woo her, Rüdeger, dear as thou art to me,
And if by Chriemhild ever I as spouse do lie,
For that will I reward thee as may best be shown,
And thou my heart's desiring will in true faith have done.

" Of my crown lands will I such portion to thee give,
That thou with thy companions right joyfully mayst live ;
Of horses and of raiment whatever thou mayst need,
For this thy journey will I order with all speed."

To whom replied the Margrave, wealthy Rüdeger :

"I should be much to censure did I thy wealth desire.

Thy swift Envoy will I to the Rhine gladly be,

And with my own wealth travel ; hast thou not given it me ?"

Outspake then King Etzel : "When thinkest forth to fare

To the lovely widow ? So shall God for thee care

Hereafter in all honour, and eke the Lady mine ;

And may good fortune help thee that she towards us incline."

Then again spake Rüdeger : "Ere hence we ride away,

We must be well furnished with arms and trappings gay,

That with all honour we may stand before the Queen ;

Five hundred gallant Recken shall with us to the Rhine.

"When they of Burgundy shall see me and my men,

With one voice the people shall avow it then,

That ne'er before has monarch so many heroes keen

Sent to such a distance as thou hast to the Rhine."

Yet further spake the Margrave : "This also will I say,

From hence we forth will journey the four and twentieth day.

Gotelind, my dear lady, the news shall quickly know,

That to Queen Chriemhilda I as Envoy go."

To Bechlaren did Rüdeger send tidings swiftly then,

Which both joy and sorrow caused the Margravine ;

He told her he must journey to woo the King a bride ;

Then on the lovely Helke she thought, and softly sighed.

When from the speedy Envoy the tidings she did gain,

Grieved was she in some part, to sorrow she was fain ;

Would she another mistress like Helke ever find ?

As this thought possessed her she was sad in mind.

On the seventh morning Rüdiger forth did ride ;
 At this right glad was Etzel, his joy he did not hide.
 In the city of Vienna their equipment ready lay ;
 From his journey would he then no longer stay.

His lady, Gotelinda, tarried at Bechlaren.
 Rüdiger's fair daughter, the young Margravine,
 Looked gladly for her father and the knights in his train :
 In fond anticipation did they both remain.

Before the noble Rüdiger from Vienna fair
 To Bechlaren did travel, for him ready were
 Rich and costly dresses, by the sempsters made ;
 After such fashion were they that they but few did need.

When at Bechlaren Castle now arrived were they,
 Quarters for his comrades did Sir Rüdiger pray
 With kind and courteous greeting ; of these they did not fail,
 The wealthy Gotelinda her lord did gladly hail.

His fair and lovely daughter, the young Margravine,
 At her father's coming glad enough was seen ;
 And the brave knights of Hunland, how pleased she saw them
 there !

Then said the noble damsel with bright and smiling air :

" Welcome in God's name are ye, my father and his train:
 Gracious thanks were given by many a worthy Thane,
 With grave and courteous bearing to the maiden bright,
 Her husband's wish by Gotelind was quickly read aright.

As in the night Gotelinda by Sir Rüdiger lay,
 With gentle speech the lady to her lord did say :
 " Whither then does send you the Monarch of Hunland ? "
 To his fair wife spake he : " That shall you understand.

"For my master must I woo another wife,
Since the lovely Helke is bereft of life ;
So will I to Chriemhild ride to the far Rhine :
Here amongst the Hunmen she shall rule a mighty queen."

"God grant it !" said Gotelinda, "may it happen so,
Since we such high rumour of the lady know.
Perchance as we grow older our loss she may atone ;
Amongst the Huns we gladly should see her wear the crown."

Then spake the Margrave Rüdeger : "Dear Lady mine,
Those that from hence with me shall journey to the Rhine,
Let them of your choicest share right lovingly :
When heroes are well cared for they keep their mettle high."

She answered : "There is not one but I would gladly see
That he should take whatever his desire may be,
Ere he hence departeth with your following."

"So will you," quoth the Margrave, "to me great pleasure
bring."

Hei ! what costly raiment from their rooms they bore,
Of those the noble Recken were given ample store ;
Quickly they were robed from neck downward to the spur.
Whatever most did please him chose Sir Rüdeger.

On the seventh morning from Bechlaren rode
The Host and his Recken, they carried weapons broad
And many a gay mantle thro' Bavarian land ;
Small chance had they of meeting any robber band.

Before the twelfth morning near to the Rhine they drew ;
The tidings of their coming on all sides swiftly flew :
The King and all his warriors the news right soon did hear
Of the gallant strangers. The King 'gan question there

If they were known to any ? that let him quickly say.
One saw the sumpter horses laden heavily :
How wealthy were these heroes, that could well be known.
They found them ready quarters in the spacious town.

When now the unknown Degen had ridden to the land,
With eager curious glances the foreign guests were scanned :
Greatly was it wondered whence to the Rhine came they.
The King inquired of Hagen who these lords might be ?

" As yet I have not seen them," Hagen made reply ;
" When I have beheld them I can haply say
From whence they have ridden hither to our town.
How strange soe'er they may be, to me they will be known."

Meantime to their quarters the foreign guests were ta'en.
Soon in rich apparel were the Envoys seen
With their gallant comrades riding to the Court.
Costly were their garments in dainty fashion wrought.

Then spake the doughty Hagen : " As far as I can say,
Though these knights I have not beheld for many a day.
Yet such is their bearing as were it Rüdiger
From the far Hunland country, that Knight so keen and yare."

" How could that have chanced ?" King Gunther swift replied,
" That the Lord of Bechlaren to this land should ride ?"
But the words had hardly fallen from the King,
When they saw bold Hagen Rüdiger welcoming.

He and his comrades quickly to greet the strangers ran ;
Sprang then from their horses five hundred Degen keen.
A right hearty welcome the knights from Hunland had ;
Ne'er before did Envoys go so bravely clad.

Then cried Von Troneg Hagen with loud and ringing tone :
" Welcome to us now are ye, Degen, every one,
My Lord of Bechlaren and all your knightly train."
Thus did the gallant Hun Lord honoured reception gain.

The King's nearest kinsmen pressed around him there,
Then said the brave Sir Ortwein to Margrave Rüdegef :
" We have not seen amongst us for many a long day
Any guests so welcome, that must I truly say !"

Thanks for such a greeting gave the Recken all.
With their comrades went they into the spacious Hall,
Where they found the Monarch with his knights standing by ;
From his seat uprose he with gracious courtesy.

With what hearty friendship he did the Envoys greet !
Gunther and Prince Gernot right lovingly did meet
Their guest and all his people, this no shame could bring.
The good Knight Rüdeger by both hands took the King.

To the seat he led him whereon he himself sate,
Then to the guests they served (willingly they did that)
Cups of mead so luscious, and of the best of wine,
Such as one can only find upon the Rhine.

Geiselher and Geze by this had drawn near ;
Dankwart, too, and Volker were soon made aware
Of these foreign comers. Joyous they were in mood ;
Before the King they welcomed these noble knights and good.

Then to the King his master did Sir Hagen say :
" Let us with hearty welcome this courtesy repay,
To whate'er cause we owe it that brings us the Margrave,
Reception full and loving fair Gotelind's lord should have."

Then spake the Monarch Gunther : " Let me an answer hoar ;
Tell me now, I pray you, how they both do fare,
Etzel and Dame Helke in the far Hunland ?"
To whom replied the Margrave : " That shall you understand."

Uprose from his seat then the Knight and all his train,
And to the King thus spake he : " If I seek not in vain
For your good leave, great Monarch, my lips shall naught conceal ;

The message that I carry gladly will I reveal."

He said : " Whatever message you to us do bring,
Leave have you now to speak it without more dallying ;
Let me then and my Degen now these tidings hear ;
In all due honour shall you this Commission bear."

Then spake the gallant Envoy : " The great King sends to you,
Here upon the Rhine, his love and service true, .
And to all the Degen who do your rule obey ;
In good faith have we ridden to greet you here this day.

" To you the noble Etzel confides his bitter need ;
His people are in sorrow, my Lady she is dead,
My Lord's wife so gentle, Helke the wealthy Queen :
Many lovely maidens by this are orphans seen,

" Children of noble Princes whom she has had in ward ;
Hence thro' all the country great lament is heard.
Left now is no one willing o'er these true guard to keep ;
Therefore methinks the Monarch finds his grief seldom sleep."

Quoth Gunther : " God reward him that he thus freely sends,
For aught wherein may serve him I and these my friends.
The greeting heard I gladly which you have brought this day ;
Right willingly shall serve you all who me obey."

Then from those of Rhineland spake Gernot the brave :
" For loss of fair Queen Helke the world may ever grieve,
And for those noble virtues which graced her beauty rare."
So also witnessed Hagen and many a Degen there.

Then again spake Rüdeger, the noble Envoy high:
' Permit me now, Sir Monarch, that I may further say
What my well-loved Master to you would make known ;
By loss of his fair Lady in great trouble he is thrown.

" It has been told my Master, Chriemhild a widow is ;—
Sir Siegfried is dead : were there now truth in this,
And you were consenting,—so let her wear the crown
Over Etzel's kingdom : my Lord's wish I make known."

Then said the wealthy Gunther with high and courteous mood
' If she but be willing, to me 'twould seem right good.
Her answer she shall give you before the third day ;
If she make no refusal how could I your Lord gainsay ?"

Good quarters to the strangers they did quickly show.
Such services were given that Rüdeger did allow
He had of good friends many in King Gunther's train.
Hagen served him gladly—he had his guest once been.

Thus then tarried Rüdeger until the third day.
The Host his council summoned as was his prudent way,
And asked his friends and kinsmen if they approved this thing,
That Chriemhild for her husband should take the noble King.

They were all consenting save Hagen alone ;
He the Monarch Gunther addressed with cautious tone :
" If you are well advised you will in this take care ;
Should she to go be willing of that you should beware."

"Why then," answered Gunther, "should I not let it be ?
Whate'er of love Chriemhilda in future days may see
That would I gladly sanction ; she is my sister dear.
Ourselves should woo her to it if for her honour it appear."

"Let alone such counsel," did Hagen swift reply ;
"If of this King Etzel you knew as much as I,
And you do let her love him as you have said but now,
That shall you in good earnest before long sorely rue."

"And why then?" answered Gunther ; "easily shunned is
that ;

So near to him I am not that I through his hate
Need ever suffer trouble, e'en should he with her wed."
Hagen again retorted : "It will to mischief lead."

Of Geiselher and Gernot to ask they then began,
If these Lords conceivèd fairly of the plan,
That the wealthy Monarch should have Chriemhild for his bride?
Opposed it still did Hagen, but none else beside.

Then from those of Rhineland spake the Knight Geiselher :
"Now may you, friend Hagen, the truth in plainness hear ;
If she her wrongs avengèd, on you the burden lay.
What fortune may await her rests not with you to stay.

"Wrongs both great and grievous my sister owes to you,"
Said again Sir Geiselher, the Knight so brave and true ;
"You have it well deserved if she should work you woe :
Ne'er before was lady of her joys bereavèd so."

"Well know I that," quoth Hagen, "that you may well believe ;
And should King Etzel take her in his land to live,
Whenever chance may favour she will work us woe.
Beneath her rule will muster stalwart men enow."

To whom with speedy answer gallant Gernot said :
" Be it then decided that until both are dead
We will never journey into King Etzel's land.
But let us serve her truly as our honour does command."

To whom retorted Hagen : " That will I hear from none ;
And should the noble Chriemhild wear Queen Helke's crown,
Trouble she will bring us whenever chance invites ;
Let it stay as at present, 'twere far better for ye knights."

In answer spake then Geiselher, the fair Ute's child :
" Not yet shall all we Degen with perjury be soiled !
What love she yet may meet with that will we gladly see ;
Say what you will, Hagen, faithful to her I'll be."

This when heard the Troneger sore troubled was his mood.
Geiselher and Gernot, the haughty Recken good,
And the wealthy Gunther did all at length agree,
If Chriemhilda wished it, they would let it be.

Then spake the Margrave Gexe : " I will the Lady tell,
That she towards King Etzel may bear herself right well.
He has so many Degen who to his rule are sworn,
He may well requite her for what trouble she has borne."

Then to the Lady Chriemhild did the swift Knight repair ;
With kindness she received him ; how quickly spake he there :
" Right gladly you may greet me and give me guerdon gay ;
Now will good fortune part you from all your woe this day."

" To win your love, fair Lady, are Euvoyas here at hand —
Sent by the noblest Degen who e'er a kingly land
Ruled with fullest honour, and the Crown did bear—
Knights right noble are they, as from your brother you may hear."

Then spake the sorrowing Lady: "Now let the good God stay
You and all my kinsmen, that ye never may
Put scorn on me, unhappy. What were I to a man,
Who from a true wife ever heart's love sought to gain?"

Thus hotly she opposed. There came then to her
Gernot, her loved brother, and the young Geiselher.
Fondly they did greet her and comforted her mood;
If she would take King Etzel that seemed to them right good.

Still did the pious Lady unconvinced remain
That it could ever be that she should love again.
Then prayed of her the knights that this at least should be,
If for naught else willing she would yet the Envoys see.

"That will I not refuse you," the noble Lady spake;
"Receive here will I gladly, for his high virtue's sake,
The good and trusty Rüdiger; had he not Envoy been,
To any other wooer I had remained unseen."

Then said she:—"On the morrow bring him to me here
To my Kemenātē, the good Rüdiger;
So that the Knight my purpose I myself may tell."
Then 'gan she anew sorely to weep and to bewail.

No other wish but this now had noble Rüdiger,
That he once might see her, the King's daughter fair.
He knew himself so suasive, if he could but be heard,
He surely would persuade her to marry with his Lord.

Early on the morrow, as the Mass sounded clear,
Came the noble Envoys; a mighty throng was there.
Those who with Sir Rüdiger to the Court would go
In haughty grace did furnish a rare and wondrous show.

Chriemhild, the lovely Lady, in pure and simple mood,
Waited there for Rüdeger, the noble Envoy good.
In the dress he found her which she did daily wear,
But all her attendants did in rich robes appear.

E'en to the very threshold the Queen to meet him went,
And greeted Etzel's Degen with fair and kind intent. *ac*
Only himself the twelfth came he before the Queen ;
They served him with great honours—better Envoy ne'er was
seen.

She bade the Knight be seated, those also in his train.
Before the Lady standing were seen the Margraves twain,
Eckewart and Gexe, the noble Degen good.
For the Queen's sake appeared no one of merry mood.

Around her there was seated many a noble maid ;
The lovely Lady only grief and sorrow had.
At her breast her mantle was with hot tears wet ;
Well on the Lady Chriemhild the Margrave noted that.

Then spake the lordly Envoy : " Gracious Princess fair,
To me and to my comrades who have come with me here,
Vouchsafe now your good sanction, that we may before you stand,
And tell to you the reason why we have ridden to this land."

" My good leave have you surely," the Lady did reply ;
" Whate'er your message may be, fixed in mind am I
Right willingly to hear it ; you are an Envoy good."
In this they all perceived her unpropitious mood.

Then spake Bechlaren's Master, Margrave Rüdeger :
" Etzel, the mighty Monarch, sends to you, Lady, here
A true and loving message, into this far-off land ;
To win your love he has here many good knights at hand.

"As a friend he bids you a happy love to take ;
With you a lasting friendship he is prepared to make,
As once with Queen Helke, who in his heart warm lay ;
Remembering her sweet virtues he has many a hapless day."

Then spake the royal Lady : "Margrave Rüdeger,
If of my heart's sorrow any one was 'ware,
Ne'er would he me counsel to take a man again ;
With my lost love did vanish more than wife e'er did gain."

"What comforts more in sorrow," said the gallant Knight,
"Than friendly love ? The man who this has learned aright,
And for himself has chosen where his heart may rest,
He feels well that in sorrow naught cheers, like love, the breast."

"And were you now but willing to love my noble Lord,
Twelve crowns, rich and costly, shall be to you assured.
Of thirty kings my Master will give to you the land,
All which he has conquered with his mighty hand."

"And you shall be mistress o'er many a worthy Thane,
Who to my Lady Helke homage to give were fain ;
And over many ladies who served her faithfully,
Of high birth and princely," said the hero gay.

"Besides, the King will give you—such message do I bear,
If you will be but willing the Crown with him to share—
Power the very highest that Helke e'er did gain ;
So proudly you shall lord it o'er Etzel's whole domain."

"How could I again ever," so the Queen replied,
"Let my senses tempt me to be a hero's bride ?
Death has, thro' my lost one, dealt me such bitter pain
That until my life ends I ne'er can love again."

Outspake once more the Envoy : " Rich and noble Queen,
Your life will with Etzel so fair and bright be seen,
That if you will but consent you will rejoice for aye :
Many stalwart Degen the King has in his pay.

" The ladies of Queen Helke with your maidens fair
Shall together furnish such a bevy rare,
That all our stalwart Recken shall be of cheery mood :
Lady, be advised, it shall be truly for your good."

She spake with noble bearing : " Now let this converse be
Until the early morning ; then come again to me.
An answer to your message I then will let you have."
Fain must they obey her, the gallant Degen brave.

When then for their lodgings they had departed all,
Bade the high-born Lady, Prince Geiselher to call,
And her mother also ; to both she turned to say :
" Tears only did become her, naught else could ever be."

Then spake her brother Geiselher ; " Sister, 'tis my belief,
Which I would gladly credit, your trouble and your grief
King Etzel will turn from you, if you with him will wed ;
Let who will council other, methinks you'll well have sped.

" Amends he, well can make thee," said Geiselher again ;
" From Rhodan to the Rhine-beach, from Elbe e'en to the Main,
Rules no other monarch so mighty and so dread :
Gladdened thou mayst be truly that he seeks thee to wed."

She answered : " Dear brother, how canst thou urge me here !
Weeping and lamenting were better for me far.
How could I, 'mid the Recken, to the Court sitly go ?
If ever I had beauty it is no longer so."

Then did Dame Ute counsel her well-loved daughter too :
" What thy brother urges, dear child, that shalt thou do :
Follow thy kinsmen's counsel, it shall be well with thee.
Too long in this great sorrow do I thee buried see."

Oft had she prayed to heaven that again her hand
Silver and gold and raiment might have at command,
As when had lived her Hero, the Knight so true and brave.
Not many happy hours thereafter did she have.

To herself she pondered : " Shall I my body then
Give thus to a heathen ? I am a Christian ;
So should I shame and scorning on earth for ever know.
Gave he me all his riches this would I never do."

The converse now was over. All night until the day,
The Lady in her chamber deeply thoughtful lay ;
Nor the sad tears dried she from her eyes so bright,
Till she to early matins went with the morning light.

The hour of Mass brought also the Princes there again.
By the hand their sister they had fondly ta'en,
And counselled her to marry the great Hunland King ;
But yet to the Lady no gladness they could bring.

Then came to her the Envoys from King Etzel's Court,
Who to quit the country now permission sought,
And what was her decision, whether Yea or No ?
Then came also Rüdeger. His comrades were not slow

To urge him to discover all the great Kings' mood,
And it should be done quickly, that seemed to each one good,
So long was the journey to their land again.
They brought the noble Margrave where Chriemhild could be
seen.

Then to the royal Lady did the brave Knight pray,
With gentle words and loving, that she her mind would say ;
What answer they should carry to King Etzel's land.
The hero in his wooing got small comfort at her hand.

" Her love again she never would on man bestow."
Against this spake the Margrave : " Then you would wrongly
do :
Why should you destroy thus your lovely body fair ?
You may yet with honour live with some good man share."

Naught availed his wooing until the wary Knight
To a private converse the Lady did invite,
And told her he had warrant her great wrongs to redress.
Then at length her sorrow grew a little less.

He spake then to the Lady : " Let your weeping be ,
Had you amongst the Hunmen no one else but me,
With my trusty Degen and those who with me go,
It shall go hard with any who have worked you woe."

At this appeared much comforted the Lady in her mood.
" Come then," she said, " and swear this,—if ever any should
Wrong me,—you the foremost will venge me on my foe."
Then answered her the Margrave : " That will I gladly do."

With all his trusty Degen swore to her Rüdiger
To serve her ever truly, and that his Recken there
Should in all things obey her in King Etzel's land,
Wherein they might with honour ; thereto he pledged his hand.

Pondered the faithful Lady : " If I thus can gain
Of firm friends so many, what does it matter then,
What the world says of me, the poor sorrowing one !
For my Lord's death, it may be, vengeance shall yet be don

She thought: "This Monarch Etzel of brave knights has his fill,

And these shall I rule over,—I may do what I will:—

He also has such riches which I can give away;

The base and evil Hagen took all my gold from me."

She said then to Sir Rüdeger: "If I did not know

That he was a heathen I would consent to go,

According to his wishes, that I his wife should be."

Replied to her the Margrave: "Lady, leave that to me.

"He is not quite a heathen, you may rest sure therein;

He was indeed converted, this dear Lord of mine,

Only that to the heathens, he has turned again;

With your love, fair Lady, he would better counsel gain.

"There is in his service many a Christian knight,

So that from King Etzel you need fear no slight;

Perchance you'll prove successful that he baptized might be,

Then should we with great honour you both wedded see."

Then spake again her brother: "Promise it, sister mine,

And to the future shall you all your care resign."

So long they her entreated till she in sorrowing mood

Promised before the Degen to wed their Monarch good.

She said: "I will go with you, since it needs must be!

I, the poor widow, will to the Huns away,

If I some friends can muster to take me to the land."

On this the lovely Chriemhild gave the Knight her hand.

The Margrave said: "Two Recken stand beside you here,

And many Degen have I; so shall it well appear,

That we with ample honour can bring you over Rhine;

Lady, you shall no longer in Burgundy remain.

" Warriors five hundred with my friends do stand,
These shall be your servants here and in Etzel's land,
Whatever you may order ; I myself ready am,
When of my troth you mind me ; that will I never shame.

" Your riding gear is ready and waits you here below—
What Rûdeger advises will never work you woe—
And speak you to your maidens that they may go with you
To meet us will be trooping many a hero true."

Precious jewels had she, which in Siegfried's day
With many a maid around her she wore in proud array
With honour on her journies ; these she sought again.
Hei ! what beauteous saddles the lovely ones did gain !

If they at pageants ever raiment rich did wear,
For this journey had they good store ready there,
Since of the Monarch Etzel they had so much heard ;
From the ches's they gathered what they so long had stored

Busy were the maidens a'en to the fourth day ;
They sought out from their presses whatever in them lay.
Her chambers to throw open Chriemhild then began ;
To enrich well thought she all those in Rûdeger's train.

The gold she still had by her that came from Nibelung land
This amongst the Huns would now divide her hand.
Mules a hundred could not have borne it thence away.
News of Chriemhild's doings Hagen heard that day.

He said : " She ne'er with favour will us again behold,
So still here shall tarry the mighty Siegfried's gold.
Why should I let this treasure go amongst the foe ?
With this gold well wot I what Chriemhild will do.

" If from hence she take it I of a surety know,
She will so divide it as to work me woe.
She has not the horses to bear it from this land ;
Keep it here will Hagen, that let her understand."

When she this did gather it caused her grievous pain.
The three Princes also to know of this were fain,
To alter it essayed they. When that might not be,
To her the noble Rüdeger spake with courage free :

" Fair and wealthy Princess, why weep you for the gold ?
Yourself does our King Etzel with such love behold,
When his eyes do see you he will give you such a hoard,
That you will never spend it ; thereto I pledge my word."

Then spake the royal widow : " Noble Rüdeger,
Never did King's daughter such a treasure share
As that of which this Hagen to rob me now does aim."
Then to her secret chamber Gernot her brother came.

With the King's key the fastening with force he open threw.
From Chriemhilda's treasure they brought out to view
Of marks thirty thousand, or more it may have been,
These gave they to the strangers ; Gunther great joy did win.

Then spake Bechlaren's Master, Gotelind's husband strong :
" And if all the treasure to Chriemhild did belong,
Which was ever carried from the Nibelung land,
Disturbed it should be never by mine or the Queen's hand.

" Let it still here tarry since ours it may not be ;
From my stores I'll furnish ample upon the way,
So that with this we well can dispense with reason clear ;
Whate'er may cost the journey we have enough to spare."

At all times her maidens ready had in store
Of gold the very purest that ever mortal saw,
Twelve chests amply furnished, these they thence did bear,
And many a jewel also from foreign countries rare.

The power of grim Hagen appeared to her too great.
Of the altar offering she had marks a thousand yet ;
These she gave for masses for her late husband dear.
A true and faithful parting this seemed to Rüdiger.

Then spake the wealthy Lady : " My friends, then, where are
they,
Who for the love they bear me will now exiled be ?
They with me shall journey into the Hunnish land ;
Harness and steeds to purchase they shall have gold in hand."

Then to the fair King's daughter the Margrave Eckewart said :
" Since in your loved service these many years have sped,
I have been ever faithful," so spake the Degen true,
" And so to the end I will abide with you.

" Ride with me will also five hundred stalwart men,
These in trusty service I beg you to retain ;
There shall nothing part us till that I am dead."
Thanked him greatly Chriemhild, in truth she had much need.

Their steeds now were ready, fain would they quit the land.
All their friends around them did sore weeping stand.
Ute the Queen so wealthy and many a lovely maid,
Showed to all what sorrow for Chriemhild's loss they had.

A hundred noble maidens journeyed in her train,
Robed in such fashion as to their rank did appertain.
By their eyes so lovely many a tear was shed ;
Yet afterwards with Etzel gladsome lives they led.

Then came the noble Geiselher, with him Gernot too ;
Also their brave comrades as they had promised true ;
Their sister would they escort o'er the country side.
A thousand gallant Degen in their train did ride.

Came also the swift Gexe and eke Sir Ortewein ;
Rumolt the steward with them too did join.
Good quarters they found ready, e'en to the Danube shore ;
When they the town had quitted, King Gunther rode no more.

Ere from the Rhine they journeyed, before them they did send
Swiftly riding heralds into the Hunnish land,
To let know King Etzel that his Knight Rüdeger
For his bride had won him the noble Queen so fair.

The Envoys travelled swiftly—hasten well might they
For the mighty honour and the rich Envoys' pay.
When with their glad tidings their journey now was done,
Seldom had King Etzel such joyous message known.

For the news they carried the King to them did give
So many costly presents that they well might live
Right joyfully for ever till that they were dead.
In love had thus soon vanished Etzel's sorrow and need.

TWENTY-FIRST ADVENTURE.

Chriemhilda journeys to the Rhine.

Let the heralds ride ! 'Tis ours to let you know
How the fair King's daughter thro' the land did go
When Gernot and Geiselher from her side did part ;
Good service they had done her ; true they were in heart.

Veringen passed, they rode near to the Danube's wave,
Then of the Queen the Degen leave began to crave,
That they again returning might journey to the Rhine :
Such parting from her kinsmen was not tearless seen.

Then to his dear sister the swift Geiselher said :
" Lady, if e'er it happen that you of me have need,
Whatever danger fronts you—send me word, I pray,
To Etzel's land to serve you will I ride straightway."

All her kinsmen round her she kissed right lovingly ;
At that hour a tender parting one might see
'Twixt Chriemhilda's Recken and those in Rüdiger's train.
Fair and noble maidens went forward with the Queen.

A hundred and four rode they ; bravely were they clad
In rich and varied raiment ; many a buckler broad
Was borne upon the journey behind these ladies bright.
Then from them back returned many a noble knight.

So in haste they passèd thro' Bavaria down ;
Quickly spread the tidings that many guests unknown
Riding thus were coming. Where stand yet cloister walls,
And where the Inn's fierce torrent into the Danube falls,

In the town of Passau a Bishop then did dwell.
Empty grew the quarters and the princely town as well ;
In haste they journeyed downward thro' Bavaria,
Where the Bishop Pilgerin found Chriemhild the fair.

The Recken of the country were in sooth right glad,
When in her train they notèd so many a lovely maid ;
Caress them with their glances did the bold knights around.
Good lodgings for the strangers were then quickly found.

There at Plädelingen should they the night abide ;
From all around the people to meet them there did ride.
Whatsoe'er they needed was given with ready cheer ;
They took it all with honour—so was it soon elsewhere.

With his fair niece the Bishop rode to Passau down.
When was known the tidings to the Burghers of the town,
That the lovely Princess Chriemhild was at hand,
With honour would the merchants receive her in the land.

When now the Bishop counted that she there would stay,
Spake Eckewart the Degen : " How can that well be ?
We must journey farther to Sir Rüdeger's Hall :
Many knights await us ; known is it to them all."

By this had come the tidings to fair Gotelind's ear ;
Bestirred herself right quickly she and her daughter dear.
Rüdeger had her bidden, so it seemèd him good,
If thereby they might comfort the Princess in her mood,

That she should go to meet her with all his courtly train
Downward to the Ense. When that now began,
Thronging the ways the people were seen on every side;
Each to meet the strangers hasted to walk or ride.

Now to Efferdingen did the Queen draw near.
In the Bavarian country of robbers they did hear,
Who did infest the highways, as they were wont to do—
Perchance these bold marauders might harm the strangers too.

This had well prevented the Lord of Bechlaren;
He led a thousand Degen, or more there might have been.
Then came Gotelind also, Sir Rüdeger's lady bright;
In proud array was with her many a stalwart knight.

Over the Traun they passed by Ens upon the plain;
There all standing ready huts and tents were seen,
That in the night the travellers quiet rest might share.
For their entertainment Sir Rüdeger did care.

Rode then from her lodgings to meet them on the way
The lovely Gotelinda. Many horses gay,
With jingling bridles harnessed, on the road drew near.
A good reception had they, so loved was Rüdeger.

As they from either quarter thus encountered now,
With practised grace in riding the knights made goodly show,
With feats of gallant daring; this saw many a maid.
Of this courteous service was the Queen right glad.

As to greet the strangers came those in Rüdeger's train,
Many splintered lances in the air were seen
From sturdy Recke's grasping in the knightly play.
Then before the ladies they rode for thanks to pray.

They let the contest finish. Many a greeting kind
Friends were interchanging. Escort now did find
The lovely Gotelinda to where Chriemhild was seen.
Whoe'er could serve the ladies had little rest, I ween.

The Lord of Bechlaren rode to Gotelind's side;
Little of sorrow did it the noble dame betide,
That he in such good fettle from the Rhine journeyed had.
Her sorrows for the most part thro' her great joy were laid.

When she had received him he let her on the plain
Alight with all the ladies who had ridden in her train.
To help them down was busy many a Recke brave;
Such service to the ladies with eager zeal they gave.

When the Lady Chriemhild the Margravine did know,
With her companions standing, no nearer would she go;
With her rein she curbed the steed she rode upon,
And quickly from the saddle let them lift her down.

The Bishop now came forward with Sir Eckewart joined,
His lovely niece conducting to the fair Gotelind.
Those who stood between them quickly did give place;
Then on the mouth did Gotelind the stranger Lady kiss.

With kind words and loving spake the Margravine :
"Glad am I, dear Lady, that my eyes have seen,
Here in this far country, your wondrous beauty rare !
Greater joy than this I could not hope to share."

Said Chriemhild : "God reward you, noble Gotelind,
If with Botelung's offspring I may be one in mind,
May all good things await you which you have wished to me."
That which must later happen she could not yet foresee.

Greetings kind encountered many a maiden there ;
To do them knightly service the Degen ready were.
Their salutation over, on the grass they sate them down ;
Much was there to hear spoken of things to them unknown.

The guests with wine they served. By this it was high day ;—
Upon the ground the Escort might no longer stay ;
Stoutly they rode forward till broad tents did appear.
The very best of service had the strangers there.

The night until the morning in quiet rest was passed.
The party from Bechlaren were thither sent in haste,
That the honoured strangers might good reception gain.
For all this cared Rüdger, small cause had they to plain.

Around the walls the casements were wide open thrown,
The Castle of Bechlaren of mighty strength was known.
The guests within were ushered, gladly received they were ;
Quiet rest procured them the noble Rüdger.

Then came with her companions the Margrave's daughter fair,
That the royal Lady she might meet with loving care.
With them her mother also, the noble Margravine ;
Between the knights and maidens greetings glad were seen.

Hand in hand they passed, together they did go,
To a stately palace, goodly was its show ;
Beneath the walls the Danube a swelling torrent went ;
There they could sit at leisure, and merry hours they spent.

Little can I tell you of what further there befell ;
That they so soon must onward could not but bewail
Chriemhilda's Recken, sorry they were indeed.
Hei ! what brave knights with them from Bechlaren did speed !

Many a loving service did them Sir Rüdeger.
Then gave the royal Lady twelve golden bracelets rare
To Gotelinda's daughter ; fair robes too left her hand,
None better had she brought with her to Etzel's land.

Tho' from her had been taken the Nibelungen gold,
She yet would make all happy who did her behold
With the little treasure which she did still command ;
To her Host's retainers great largess gave her hand.

The Lady Gotelind also her Rhine guests so did treat
With such ample honour and gifts both small and great,
That of these strangers seldom did any one appear
Who did not her jewels or noble raiment wear.

Their early meal partaken, when they now forth would fare,
Her true and faithful service the Castle's mistress there
Proffered with loving speeches to King Etzel's bride.
Her daughter fair was clinging with kisses to her side.

Then said she to Chriemhilda : " Should it seem well to you,
So know I my dear father this would gladly do,
That I with you should follow to the Hunnen land."
How gladly heard Chriemhilda she had this true heart gained !

Now before Bechlaren the steeds were ready seen,
Permission for departure sought the noble Queen
From Sir Rüdeger's Lady and his daughter fair.
Many a lovely maiden had a fond parting there.

Little hereafter were they to meet for many a day.
As Medilik was passed, men brought upon the way
Golden goblets plenty filled with rosy wine
For the noble strangers—gladly they were seen.

A Host there had his dwelling, Astolt was his name,
Who showed them where the highway into Austria came,
Opposite Mutaren by lower Danube's wave ;
In this right worthy service to the fair Queen he gave.

With much love now the Bishop from his niece did part ;
That she well might prosper how prayed he with full heart !
And that she might win honour as Helke formerly ;
Hei ! what fame she met with in Hunland speedily !

The travellers now journeyed to the Traisem down.
Good Sir Rüdeger's vassals had them warm service shown,
Until the Hunnish Degen to meet them riding came ;
Great honours there and ample received the royal dame.

Now by the Traisem the Hunnish Prince did own
A wide and rich dominion, in the land well known
By name of Zeisenmauer ; there Helke once did dwell,
And practized such high virtues as would ne'er again prevail,

Save with Chriemhild only. To give she well inclined ;
She ought, in sooth, some pleasure after her grief to find,
In all this honour shown her by King Etzel's train ;
This soon from the Degen she to the full did gain.

The realm of King Etzel was so wide renowned,
That amongst his courtiers there were ever found
The very bravest Recken of whom one eye did hear ;
Christians and heathens came alike to him there.

Beneath his rule was witnessed, as ne'er again will be,
Thorough Christian virtue and heathen practice free,
Whereby to each was given as custom did require ;
Such was the Monarch's kindness, all had their full desire.

TWENTY-SECOND ADVENTURE.

How Chriemhilda was received by the Huns.

THEY stayed at Zeisenmauer until the fourth day.
Meanwhile in the streets the dust not idly lay ;
On all sides it mounted as from a burning brand.
Then rode Etzel's people thro' the Austrian land.

Now to the Monarch Etzel time brought some relief,
So that before new fancies vanished his former grief,
As through all the country Chriemhild so nobly drew.
Swiftly went the Monarch where he the lovely one might view

Of divers speech and customs saw one on the way
Before King Etzel riding—of knights a brave array ;
Of Christians and heathens an army broad was there :
Right gallantly they bore them before the ladies fair.

There rode Greeks and Russians massed in number strong ;
Poles and Wallachians swiftly sped along
On well-mettled coursers, which firmly they bestrode.
Each after his own fashion his native customs showed.

From the land of Kiew came many a stalwart man,
And savage Peschenegen, who in sport began
To shoot at passing wild fowl as overhead they flew :
To the point their arrows with sinewy strength they drew.

On Danube's banks there nestles a town in Austria—
Tulna is it called—there she first did hear
Of many a strange custom which she had never seen.
Greeted she was by many whom she brought to sorrow keen.

Before the Monarch Etzel rode his retinue
In gay and splendid fashion, courteous and fair to view,
Four and twenty princes, rich and of noble mien ;
One longing had they only to see their lovely Queen.

There was the Duke Ramung from Wallachia,
With seven hundred Degen he made his entry there.
Like to a flight of falcons one saw them forward swoop.
Came also Prince Gibecke with many a noble troop.

Hornbog, the swift Degen, rode with a thousand men
From the King's side forward where he might see the Queen.
After their country's custom resounded many a cry.
The Hunnish princes also rode forth in brave array.

There came, too, from Denmark, the brave Knight Hawart,
And Iring, the swift Recke, guileless and true of heart ;
Irnfried of Thüringen, a very stalwart Thane ;
They so received Chriemhilda that she honour great did gain.

With them twelve hundred horsemen in company did ride ;
Then came the Degen Blödel with three thousand men beside ;
He was King Etzel's brother, Prince of the Hunland :
In proud array they rode in where they Chriemhilda found.

Lastly came King Etzel and Sir Dietrich,
And with him all his heroes ; their serried ranks did speak
Of high and knightly prowess, of temper brave and good.
At all this was Chriemhilda much comforted in mood.

Then spake to the Lady the Degen Rüdiger :

"Princess, we give reception to the great Monarch here,
Whoe'er to kiss I bid you, you shall both kiss and greet ;
You cannot Etzel's Recken all with like greeting meet."

From her steed they lifted the Princess to the sward.
Then no longer tarried Etzel, the wealthy Lord ;
He swung him from his courser with many a Degen good,
And full of joy came forward to where Chriemhilda stood.

Two mighty Princes, so is it known to me,
Went to meet the ladies bearing rich 'broidery,
As King Etzel hastened his peerless bride to meet,
And she the noble Princes received with kisses sweet.

She threw aside her wrappings ; then shone her colour fair
From out its golden setting. All men must declare
That the Lady Helke could not have lovelier been.
Etzel's brother, Blödel, standing near was seen.

That she should kiss him bade her Rüdiger, the Margrave true,
Also the Prince Gibecke and Sir Dietrich too.
Twelve of the gallant Recken in all kissed Etzel's Queen ;
Greeting many a Degen with kind glance she was seen.

While now stood King Etzel by Chriemhilda's side,
The younger knights behaved them as custom did provide ;
Feats of skilful prowess and daring chivalry,
Christians and heathens each as their wont did play.

What stalwart knights were noted in Sir Dietrich's train.
The shower of splintered lances fell from the air like rain,
High above the bucklers from hand of Ritter grim !
Before the Rhenish strangers was broken many a buckler rim

From the shock of spears the crashing loud did sound.
Now were all the Recken come from the country round,
And the King's guests also, many brave knights were there.
Then went the wealthy Monarch with Chriemhilda fair.

Near to them was raised a noble canopy ;
The whole field surrounded with canvas one might see,
Where from their journey's travail they might find rest at need.
Therein saw the heroes many a peerless maid

The King's fair bride encircling as she sate her down
Upon the costly damask : the Margrave care had shown
That this was nobly furnished ; they all found Chriemhild's seat
Lovely to their eyes : King Etzel's joy was great.

What the King said to her is not for me to tell ;
Her hand, white as a lily, in his did softly dwell.
Thus lovingly they rested, since Rüdiger the Knight
With Chriemhild secret dalliance to the King did not permit.

To cease they now gave order the knightly tournament ;
With honour thus was ended their noisy merriment.
Then to their tents repaired those in Etzel's train ;
Good quarters there surrounding could every one obtain.

The day now was ended, to rest they did incline,
Until the fair morning was seen again to shine.
Then to their horses hastened many a stalwart man :
Hei ! what merry pastime before the King began !

That it his state should equal the Host gave order due.
From Tulna then they journeyed Vienna's city to.
Here found they robed all gaily many a noble dame ;
King Etzel's bride so lovely they to honour came.

With overflowing plenty they had ready made
Whatever each might long for. Many a stalwart blade
Saw gaily such a feasting. Good lodgings they did show :
The marriage of the Monarch began with joy enow.

Contrive it so they could not to lodge all in the town ;
Those who were not strangers Rüdiger bade go down
That they might get their quarters in the country round :
Well know I that King Etzel was aye with Chriemhild found.

Dietrich the Degen and many another knight
Had their time of leisure with work o'ertaken quite,
In order that the strangers might be well cheered in mood ;
Rüdiger and his party found entertainment good.

The marriage was performed on Whitsun holyday,
When the Monarch Etzel with Chriemhilda lay,
In Vienna city. In sooth so many men
She with her first husband as servants did not win.

Presents she gave to many to whom she was unknown.
At this spake to the strangers some with wondering tone :
" We thought that from Chriemhilda they had taken her wealth
away,
Yet here with her presents marvels great we see."

The wedding feasts lasted until the seventeenth day.
Well wot I that one never will of a King here say,
Who such a feast has holden ; that is to us well known.
All who there were present their newest robes did don.

Never in the Netherlands had the lovely Queen
So many gallant Degen in her service seen ;
Whatever Siegfried's riches he had not with him there
So many noble Recken as to Etzel subject were.

And ne'er before had Monarch at his wedding showered
Upon his guests such mantles, rich they were and broad,
Nor such gallant raiment as each there did share ;
All this was done truly for sake of Chriemhild fair.

There reigned but one spirit for every friend and guest—
There should be nothing stinted, and all was of the best.
Whatever one might long for ready there was found ;
For love's sake many a Reeke stood unrobed around.

When now the thought would cross her how by the Rhine she
sate
Beside her noble husband, with tears her eyes were wet ;
Yet must she weep in secret that it by none was seen,
Since after all her sorrow such honour she did win.

What any did for kindness but as a wind was known
Against the Dietrich Degen ; what Botelungen's son
Had in hand him given he soon dispensed quite :
Wonders many also did Rüdeger the Knight.

From Hungary also the Degen Blödelein
Many a massive coffer to empty did begin,
Of gold and oke of silver ; this he gave around.
The heroes of King Etzel in merry mood were found.

The great King's musicians, Werbel and Schwemmelein,
Gulden marks a thousand each of them did win
From the Court assembly (or even more than that),
As the lovely Chriemhild with Etzel crowned sate.

On the eighteenth morning they from Vienna rode ;
In knightly play was pierced many a buckler broad
By lances which the Degen poised in their hand :
So came the Monarch Etzel to the Hunnish land.

In the ancient Heinburg tarried they one night.
Tell, in sooth, could no one their numbers and their might
As the armed troopers through the land did ride.
Hei ! what lovely women they found at their homeside !

At Misenburg the wealthy to take ship they began.
Covered was the water with horses and with men,
As tho' it solid ground were, which flowing there did run ;
The travel-wearied ladies found good rest thereon.

Bound together floated many a vessel good,
So that small harm could happen from billow or from flood ;
O'er these wide extended many a costly tent,
As tho' the open country were still to them present.

To Etzel's royal Castle the tidings swiftly came ;
Thereat rejoiced greatly courtier and dame.
Etzel's staff who foretime did Helke homage pay
Under Chriemhild's ruling spent many a happy day.

Awaiting them was standing many a noble maid,
Who since death of Helke had been with sorrow sad
Of Kings' daughters seven Chriemhild there did see,
Whereby was greatly honoured Etzel's whole country.

Herrat the young damsel o'er the staff had care,
Helke's sister's daughter, she was of virtue rare,
Dietrich's betrothed, and of a royal race,
Daughter of Neuntweinen, whom rumour much did grace.

At the guests' arrival of joyous mood was she ;
Much of cost and value was spent right royally.
Who could tell you ever how the King there did dwell ?
Ne'er with a Queen beforetime had the Huns fared so well.

As from the strand the Monarch came riding with his Queen,
Where all around were pressing, there you might have seen
The noble Lady Chriemhild ; what greetings she did shower ;
How in place of Helke she sate with grace and power !

Of staunch and trusty service she had ample and to spare.
The Queen made many a present of gold and raiment there,
Silver and precious jewels ; whate'er from Over-Rhine
She had brought to Hunland naught did she now retain.

In her service also did later enter there
All the King's kinsmen, and those who subject were ;
Ne'er did Lady Helke such obedience know
As till Chriemhilda perished they for her did show.

Stood thus in such honour the Court and eke the land,
That on all sides surrounding naught but pleasure reigned ;
After this each pursuing with heart and soul did crave ;
And this the Monarch's fondness and the Queen's riches gave.

TWENTY-THIRD ADVENTURE.

How Chriemhilda sought revenge.

CROWNED with highest honours, as we do truly hear,
They lived thus together until the seventh year.
A son was in the meantime born unto the Queen,
At which the Monarch Etzel could not more glad have been.

She rested not until her wish confirmed could be,
That her son by Etzel baptized she might see,
As was the Christian custom. Ortlieb his name was known.
O'er all the Monarch's kingdom a great joy was shown.

The virtues which by Helke had once practised been
Shone now long and brightly in Chriemhild the Queen.
Herrat the foreign damsel taught her the customs there,
Who yet for Lady Helke felt much grief and care.

To countrymen and strangers she was known full well ;
To princely realms aforesaid it truly ne'er befell
To own a Queen so gracious ; this all did witness there.
Praised her for this the Hunmen until the thirteenth year.

When now she knew that no one saw her with hostile eye,
As may Princes' Recken with Queens e'en to this day,
And that before her daily twelve kings were standing seen,
The great wrong she forgot not which befell her on the Rhine.

She thought, too, of the homage which in Nibelung land
Had to her been offered, and of which Hagen's hand
Had for all time robbed her by Siegfried's death-blow, —
And if it yet might happen that this should work him woe?

"'Twould happen if the Degen should come into this land."
Many a time she dreamed that she went hand in hand
With Geiselher her brother; she kissed him fondly, too,
In her gentle slumber. To grievous woe that grew.

Methinks the evil devil put it in Chriemhild's heart
From the Monarch Gunther in friendship warm to part,
Whom, as if forgiven, she kissed in Burgundy.
Her hot tears on her raiment fell again copiously.

At heart she sorely pondered both late and early too,
How that by hostile action she had been brought thereto,
That with a heathen Monarch she had been fain to wed;
She had to thank Sir Hagen and King Gunther for such need.

From her heart now seldom was this mood away.
She thought: "I am so wealthy and have such mighty sway,
That for my foes I truly sore trouble may create;
For Von Troneg Hagen I would gladly compass that.

"For my own dear loved one how oft my soul doth mourn;
On those who thus did wrong me, if I now could turn,
I would ample vengeance have for Siegfried's life!
Hardly can I expect it," said the royal wife.

Fondly they beheld her, the knights of Etzel's crown,
Chriemhilda's Recken; that was rightly done.
Her Chamberlain was Eckewart, a favoured man was he:
With Chriemhilda's wishes could no one disagree.

Each day she bethought her : " I will pray the King,
That with gentle usage he grant me this one thing :
That we invite my kinsmen hither to Hunnish ground."
The will so crafty no one in the Queen's purpose found.

As one night Chriemhilda beside the Monarch lay,
In his arms he held her as 'twas his loving way
To embrace his fair Lady ; she was to him as his life ;
Then of her foes bethought her this all-vengeful wife.

To the King then spake she : " My dear and well-loved lord,
Crave would I now gladly if you your grace accord,
That you would let me witness, if my desert be so,
That to my friends also true kindness you will show."

To whom the wealthy Monarch in gentle mood did say :
" Of this be well assured, whate'er to Reckon may
Of love and wealth be given, that shall be gladly done,
Since I in love of woman a better friend ne'er won."

Then said again Chriemhilda : " It is well known to you,
That I have noble kinsmen whose loss I deeply rue ;
Since that they so seldom seek me in this land,
I must before all people as one deserted stand."

To whom replied King Etzel : " Dear loved Lady mine,
If it be not too distant I will from Over-Rhine
To this land invite them, whome'er you wish to see."
Glad then was the Lady at his consent so free.

She said : " If you would truly please me, husband mine,
So shall you send Envoys to Worms upon the Rhine ;
Whereby may know my kinsmen of this my wish and mood,
To our land will journey many brave knights and good."

He said : " If such your wish is, so then let it be.
 In sooth you could your kinsmen not more gladly see—
 Ute's noble children—than I should them behold ;
 It gives me heartfelt sorrow that they are so distant and so cold.

" If it well will please you, dear Lady mine,
 I will now send gladly to these friends of thine
 My trusty Fiedelspieler to Burgundian land."
 Then the good musicians were quickly there at hand.

In all haste they entered where the King was seen
 Seated by his Lady. To tell them he began,
 That they should as Envoys start for Burgundy,
 And that they should take with them fair robes and trappings
 gay.

Four and twenty Recken soon apparelled were ;
 To them gave the Monarch his commission there,
 How they should invite Gunther and all his train.
 To speak with them in secret Chriemhilda was fain.

Then spake the wealthy Monarch : " Now hear what ye shall do :
 To my friends I offer all that is fair and true,
 And beg of them to journey hither to Hunnish ground ;
 Guests so precious have I as yet right seldom found.

" And if in this to follow my wish they are inclined,—
 Chriemhilda's relations,—let them no rest find,
 But this very summer come to my feasting,
 Since for my wife's brethren friendship such love does bring."

Then spake the Fiedelspieler, the haughty Schwemmelein :
 " When to hold this feasting here do you design ?
 That to your friends in Rhineland the tidings we may bring."
 " This very next Midsummer," replied Etzel the King.

"As you command so do we," Werbelein replied.
Chriemhilda bade the Envoys to her chamber guide
In the evening's quiet, and spake with them there,
Whereby soon many a Degen little love did share.

To both the Envoys spake she: "Great guerdon shall you win
If with faithful bearing you do my will herein,
And say what I do bid you in my native land;
Money and rich raiment shall you have at command.

"When now it shall happen that my friends around you press,
At Worms upon the Rhine-bench,—so shall you ne'er confess
That you have ever seen me troubled in my mood;
And give my hearty greetings to these heroes keen and good.

"Beg of them to grant me what the King does pray,
That by their so doing they take my grief away.
Before the Huns now ever all friendless am I seen;
Had I been a Recke I had gone often to the Rhine.

"And say to Gernot also, my noble brother there,
That upon earth is no one can hold him more dear;
Beg him that he bring me hither to this land
All our friends the truest, so shall we grace command.

"And say to Geiselher that he in mind do bear,
That by his will I never have had wrong to share,
Therefore in this country I would him gladly see;
For his true heart so loving he is well dear to me.

"And say, too, to my mother what honours I have won;
And if Von Troneg Hagen should the journey shun,
 on then could the passes thro' the land be shown?
 Funnish ways are to him from his youth well known."

Wondered much the Envoys what it well might mean,
That she did not leave to tarry on the Rhine
This Von Troneg Hagen. Soon had they bitter scathe ;
Thro' him were many Degen compassed with grim death.

A letter signed and sealed the King to them did give ;
Ample were their riches, right nobly might they live.
Leave had they then from Etzel and his lovely Queen ;
Well adorned their persons in highest state were seen.

TWENTY-FOURTH ADVENTURE.

Uterbel and Schwemmel ride to Worms.

As Etzel now his Envoys sent to the Rhine strand,
So did the tidings quickly fly from land to land,
He did, thro' his swift couriers, invite and eke entreat
To his courtly Tourney—there many death did meet.

The messengers rode forward from Hunland away
To the Burgundian country, their message there to say
To three noble Princes and to their lordly train,
That they came from Etzel : to hasten they were fain.

To Bechlaren the Envoys came riding with all speed,
Gladly they were served, so they of naught had need.
Rudeger and Gotelind sent a kind greeting there
To the Burgundian Degen, as did their daughter fair.

Not without presents might they ride thence on their way,
So that rode the softer the knights in Etzel's pay.
To Ute and the Princes greeting sent Rudeger—
Never yet had Margrave grown to them so dear.

To Brunhild sent they also all that was kind and good,—
Their assured fealty and willing helpful mood.
The converse done the Envoys would then farther fare ;
Said the noble Gotelind : " Now God have you in care."

Now before the Envoys had left Bavarian ground,
Werbelein the gallant had the good Bishop found ;
What he to his Rhine friends in message did unfold
That know I not to tell you. Of his bright red gold

He gave the Envoys presents as they would farther win :
" Should I here behold them," said Bishop Pilgerin,
" They would my heart well gladden, these nephews of mine ;
It is indeed but seldom I can see them on the Rhine."

Which way towards the Rhine-beach they their route did hold
I cannot now inform you. Their raiment and their gold
Remained with them unplundered, so feared was Etzel's ire,
And with such vigour governed the potent Monarch dire.

Before twelve days were over they had reached the Rhine,
And to Worms' proud city,—Werbel and Schwemmelein ;
'Twas told then to King Gunther and his knightly train
Strange Envoys had arrived ; the King to ask was fain.

Then spake the Rhine's Landlord : " Can any one make known
From whence have these strangers ridden to our town !"
That could no one tell him till the knights were seen
By Von Troneg Hagen ; to the King spake he then :

" This day brings great tidings, to that I well can swear,
Etzel's musicians have I just seen here.
These has your sister sent hither to the Rhine ;
For their Master's sake we should in welcome join."

All unchecked they rode up e'en to the palace gate ;
Ne'er had Prince's Fiedeler ridden with such state.
The servants of King Gunther quickly received them there ;
Good quarters they assigned them and of their robes took care.

in silken garb they travelled, of rich and dazzling sheen,
So that in royal presence with honour they were seen ;
Yet would they these no longer wear at Gunther's Court :
" Did any one require them ? " reply the Envoys sought.

From those who did surround them quickly some were found
Who would gladly take them ; to these they were sent round.
Berobed them then the Envoys in dress of richest hue,
As a Monarch's herald may with honour do.

To go they had permission where King Gunther sate,
These servants of King Etzel ; gladly one witnessed that.
Hagen to meet the Envoys sprang up with courtly air,
Greeting them in kind fashion ; much thanks they gave him
there.

He 'gan then to make questions what tidings they had brought ;
How was their Master Etzel and all those of his Court.
Then spake the gallant Envoy : " With us it is right well,
Ne'er were our people gayer, that can I truly tell."

They went now to King Gunther. Full was the palace Hall.
The guests they there did welcome as usage does prevail
In greeting friendly Envoys from a far country.
Around the King, Sir Werbel many a knight did see.

With courtly grace the Monarch to greet them did begin :
" Welcome, ye Fiedelspieler in King Etzel's train,
And your comrades also ; now let me understand
Wherefore Etzel sends you to Burgundian land ? "

They bowed them to the Monarch. Then answered Werbelein :
" Sends you his kindest service this dear Lord of mine,
And your sister Chriemhild, here into this land ;
In all good faith we visit you Recken at their command."

Outspake the wealthy Gunth r : " Glad am I this to hear.
How fares it with King Etzel ? " the Monarch asked them there,
" And with Chriemhild my sister in the Hun country ? "
Replied the Fiedelspieler : " That shall you learn from me.

" Ne'er before were people seen in better case,
That you well may credit, than their Highness' grace,
And their Degen also, their friends with all their train ;
Glad were they at this journey when we to part were fain."

" My thanks," replied King Gunther, " for this greeting fair,—
To him and to my sister ; may God grant it there
That they may live in gladness, they and their subjects true ;
It is with anxious question I asked these news of you."

The two younger Princes had by this time appeared,
Who now of the tidings for the first time heard.
Pleased was the young Geiselher when he the Envoys met,
For love of his dear sister he did them warmly greet :

" Ye Envoys from us Degen shall here right welcome win ;
Would that ye came riding more often to the Rhine,
Friends would you find amongst us to give you greeting true ;
In this land small grievance should you have cause to rue."

" In honour we salute you," answered Schwemmlein ;
" We could never tell you with any words of mine
How lovingly King Etzel to his land you bid,
And your noble sister ; she suffers for no need.

" Of your love and kinship reminds you now the C-----
And how faithful to her your hearts have ever been.
Therefore, in the first place, to the King are we sent,
That into Etzel's country to ride you may consent.

"That we this should ask you with warm entreaty bade
Eitzel the wealthy Monarch ; of all this boon he prayed,
If that come you would not your sister fair to see,
At least that he might gather how with himself 'twould be.

"Would you shun him therefore and eke his kingdom too ?
If the Queen were even strange and unknown to you,
So might he still merit that you came him to see ;
If you are consenting, dear to him 'twill be."

To whom the Monarch Gunther : "After the seventh night
I will give you answer what shall then seem right
To my friends in council : meantime I pray you go
From hence to your quarters where you good rest may know."

Then again spake Werbel : "Might it not well be
That we should our Lady, the wealthy Ute, see
Before we wearied Degen for our rest inquire ?"
To whom, with knightly usage, the noble Geiselher :

"In that shall none prevent you if you to her would go,
My mother also will be much pleased to have it so,
For she will see you gladly for my sister dear,
The fair Lady Chriemhild ; welcome you'll be to her."

Geiselher then brought them where he found the Dame,
Gladly she saw the Envoys who from Hunland came ;
Warmly she received them with kind and courteous mood.
They told her of their tidings, the Envoys high and good.

"My Lady sends you by us," Schwemmelein did say,
"Her true love and service, and if it might but be
That she more often saw you, so may you well believe
There is no other gladness on earth she could receive."

Then spake the royal widow : " Alas ! it cannot be ;
Tho' I would so gladly my dear loved daughter see,
Yet from us too distant dwells the noble Queen ;
May all her days with Etzel be spent in joy serene !

" Word, too, shall you send me before you go your way,
When you hence will journey ; not for many a day
Have I 'countered Envoys so gladly as I you."
Promised her the Degen that they her wish would do.

Now to their lodgings the knights from Hunland went.
Meantime the wealthy Monarch to his friends had sent ;
Gunther the King 'gan question the knights who formed his
train

What they in all this counselled ; many did answer then

" That he might ride all fearless into King Etzel's ground."
Advised him thus the Recken who stood there around.
Hagen alone stood silent with grim and hostile brow ;
At length to Gunther spake he : " Wilt deal yourself this blow ?

" You cannot have forgotten what we have done to her ;
Before Chriemhilda can we never be free from care.
I to the death have smitten her husband with my hand ;
How then ought we to venture into King Etzel's land ?"

To whom the wealthy Monarch : " My sister's wrath was spent ;
With what loving kisses ere from here she went
Did she in all pardon what we had done to her :
Even with you, Hagen, she stood in friendship there."

" Now be not you deceived whatever they may say,
These messengers from Hunland ; venture in Chriemhild's way,
And you well may forfeit honour and limb and life ;
She can a grudge well cherish, this King Etzel's wife."

Then in the council answered Gernot the stainless Knight :

“ You may with good reason of death be in fright
In the Hunnish kingdom ; were we doubt to show
And to shun our sister 'twere badly done, I trow.”

Then to the Degen also spake Geiselher the young :

“ If you are conscious, Hagen, that you have done her wrong,
So tarry in this country and for your safety care ;
But let those who fear not with us to Chriemhild fare.”

Thereto with angry glances Von Troneg's Knight did say :

“ I will not that any shall ride with you this way,
Who shall in this journey have better trust than I ;
If here you will not tarry that shall you surely see.”

Spake also then the steward Rumolt the brave Knight :

“ Our countrymen or strangers you may here invite
With all courtly usage—you have power due ;
No one, methinks, in this has asked a pledge of you.

“ If Hagen does not follow, I, Rumolt, counsel give,
Since I to you am bounden and in love and friendship live,
That you do here tarry according to my will,
And leave the Monarch Etzel alone with Chriemhild still.

“ Where on this earth could you as well as here succeed ?
You might from all your foemen be thus secure at need ;
You can deck your bodies with raiment rich and rare,
With best of wine for drinking and love of women fair,

“ And food also the choicest that was ever got
Upon this earth by monarch. If that concerns you not,
You may at least remain here with your lovely wife
Before you rashly venture thus your limb and life.

"To stay then I advise you. Richly your land has thriven ;
Redeem here can you better what pledges you have given,
Than thither 'mid the Hunmen : who knows what they may do ?
Stay then with us, Sir Gunther, so Rumolt counsels you."

"Now here we will not tarry," spake again Gernot,
"Since my sister has us so heartily besought,
And the rich King Etzel,—why should we not go ?
Those who will not with us may stay at home, I trow."

For answer spake then Hagen : "Let not amiss, I pray,
What I have said be taken ; whatever happen may,
In truth I would you counsel, if you for safety care,
That you at least well armed into Hunland fare.

"If you will make the venture, so summon all your men,
The best whom you can muster and those who form your train ;
From these will I select me a thousand Ritter good,
So that we run no danger from Chriemhild's angry mood."

"Your counsel will I follow," quick the King replied.
Messengers then sent he thro' all the country side ;
Soon there came of heroes three thousand or perhaps more—
Little they thought to 'counter such woe and trouble sore.

Gladly they came riding into Gunther's land ;
To all of them was given raiment and steeds in hand,
Of those who were selected from Burgundy to ride.
The eager King found many good Ritter at his side.

Then did Von Troneg Hagen his brother Dankwart bid
That eighty of their Recken he to the Rhine should lead.
In proud array they mustered ; harness and dress complete
Brought the swift Degen with them Gunther the King to meet.

Then came the gallant Volker, the noble Fiedelmann,
With thirty of his Degen ready in his train ;
Lordly was their raiment, such as a king might wear ;—
He would to the Hunmen, as he let Gunther hear.

Who now was this Volker you shall be well acquaint ;—
A noble Recke was he under whose banner went
Many stalwart Degen in land of Burgundy ;
The Spielman was he called since the Fiedel he could play.

Hagen chose a thousand who were to him well-known.
How in sturdy conflict they their strength had shown,
And what they had accomplished he had often seen ;
No one could do other than honour them, I ween.

Chriemhilda's Envoys were vexed with the delay ;—
They had of their Master a mighty fear alway ;
Every day they asked for their leave to go ;
Hagen put them off—craftily he did so.

To King Gunther said he : “ We will take good heed
How we let them journey till ourselves can speed
Seven days behind them into King Etzel's land ;
If they craft do purpose so shall we it withstand.

“ Thus shall Chriemhild also be not prepared thereto,
That by her counsel some one harm to us may do ;
Should she that still venture she will fare badly then,
To the Huns we marshal so many chosen men.”

The saddles and the bucklers and all their panoply,
Which into Etzel's country they should bear away,
Were now seen all ready for many a stalwart knight.
The messengers of Chriemhild to Gunther they did invite.

When the Envoys were present spake Prince Gernot thus :
"The King is pleased to sanction what Etzel asks of us ;
We will come right gladly to share his revelry,
And to see our sister, that she of doubt be free."

Then spake the Monarch Gunther : "Can you to us say
When the feast commences ? or upon what day
We shall be expected ?" Answered him Schwemmelein :
"At the next summer solstice, that shall in truth be seen."

Leave then gave the Monarch, which as yet he had withheld,
That if the Envoys still wished to see the Queen Brunhild,
They, with his permission, might parley with her now.
Opposed to this was Volker—his love he thus did show.

"My Lady Brunhilda is not so well in mood
That she can now receive you," said the Ritter good :
"Wait until to-morrow, then you the Queen can see."
They thought thus to behold her, but yet it could not be.

Then bade the wealthy Monarch, who the Envoys dear did hold,
By royal usage prompted, of his red red gold
On bucklers broad bring thither—rich he was, I trow ;
Costly gifts his kinsmen did also bring enow.

Geiselher and Gernot, Gexe and Ortwein,
As their birth was noble in this did also join ;
They offered to the Envoys such costly presents there,
That they for their Master to receive them did not dare.

Then spake to King Gunther the Envoy Schwemmelein :
"Sir King, let these presents here in this land remain.
We cannot take them with us, since our Lord forbade
That we should gifts be sharing ; also we have small need."

Then was the Rhine's Landlord troubled much in mood
That such royal presents thus despise they should,
So that his gold and raiment to take they yet were fain,
And with them home returning seek Etzel's land again.

They wished to see Dame Ute ere they departure sought ;
Geiselher, the young Prince, the musicians brought
To his mother Ute. She bade them tell the Queen,
If honour should be paid her naught nobler could she win.

Then did the royal widow her gold and jewels share
With her daughter Chriemhild, she held her still so dear ;
For Etzel's sake she also gave to the Envoys twain.
Well might they receive it ; freely 'twas offered then.

A farewell now had taken both the Envoys good
From the knights and ladies. They journeyed in gay mood
Into the Suabian country ; so far Prince Gernot bade
His Degen to ride with them that for nothing they should need.

When they now had parted from their attendants gay,
Etzel's lordship gave them peace upon their way,
So that none did them plunder of raiment or of steed ;
Into King Etzel's kingdom they rode at highest speed.

Where any friends were 'countered the news did swiftly fly,
That so soon would follow the knights of Burgundy
Riding from the Rhine-stream into the Hunnish land.
Pilgerin the Bishop had the tidings soon at hand.

When now before Bechlaren they on their way did ride,
From the Margrave Rüdeger their news they did not hide,
Nor from the Lady Gotelind, the noble Margravine ;
That they should see the Degen rejoiced them much, I ween.

Fiercely now the Envoys spurred their horses on.
They found the Monarch Etzel in his town at Gran.
Greeting upon greeting which to him had sped
To the King they carried ; for joy he flushed rose-red.

When now to Chriemhilda the tidings came to hand
That her noble brothers would come soon to the land,
She was right glad in spirit ; she gave the Envoys pay
And many a costly present—honour she gained that day.

To both she said : " Now tell me, Werbel and Schwemmelein,
Who amongst my kinsmen will at our Court be seen,
And of the chosen Degen whom we invited here ?
Say on, What said Hagen when of your message he was 'ware?"

" To the Council came he at early morn one day,—
Little of fair purpose had he then to say ;
When it was decided to ride into Hunland,
That did the grim Hagen as a death-march withstand.

" There will come your brothers, the Princes, all the three,
In right royal fashion. Who else with them will be,
And as to other details, inform you scarce I can ;
There will come here with them Volker the Fiedelmann."

" Him could I well dispense with," swift the Queen replied ;
" Will the Degen Volker come to our High-tide ?
For Hagen I am ready, he is a Recke good ;
That we here shall see him makes me glad in mood."

Then went the fair King's daughter where the King was seen.
With what gentle words spake Lady Chriemhild then :
" How pleases you this tidings, dear Lord, now tell to me ?
What I have ever longed for shall now shortly be."

“Thy wish is all my pleasure,” the King in answer said,
“And were it mine own kinsmen my heart were not so glad
That they should come hither to visit in our land ;
Thro’ thy dear friends’ kindness how has my sorrow waned.”

The chamberlains-in-waiting gave quick orders there,
That in Hall and Palace seats they should prepare
For their guests so welcome, who should now arrive.
Soon did they King Etzel of his great joy deprive.

TWENTY-FIFTH ADVENTURE.

How the Lords all journeyed to the Rhine.

Of their journey thither you shall enough hear say.
Never on their travels came in such proud array
So many gallant Degen into a Monarch's land;
They had both arms and raiment whate'er they would in hand.

The Landlord of the Rhine did choose from out his train
A thousand and sixty Degen, so we the tale did gain,
And plenty of good servants for this revel gay;
Those who at home remainèd might weep some future day.

To the courtyard at Worms their baggage they did take.
Then from Spire city an aged Bishop spake
To the fair Dame Ute: "Our friends hence will go
To this High-tide of feasting, may God preserve them so!"

Then quickly to the Princes spake the Lady good:
"You shall yet here tarry, ye heroes high of mood;
I have had a vision of trouble sore and need,
As though in this fair country all the birds were dead!"

"He who trusts in dreams," Sir Hagen did reply,
"Can, in sooth, but little of clear import see,
How in the path of honour he the best can stand;
My Master has good warrant to go to this Hunland.

"Gaily will we ride now into Etzel's land ;
Kings may well serve freely such a knightly band
As at Chriemhild's wedding we shall see, I trow."
Such was Hagen's counsel, which later worked him woe.

He had against it spoken, only that Gernot
Had scornfully him treated with temper proud and hot.
He minded him of Siegfried, Chriemhilda's husband dear,
And said : " 'Tis therefore Hagen will not this journey share."

Then spake Von Troneg Hagen : " Not fear has prompted me ;
Be it as ye will, heroes, and about it speedily ;
Well will I ride with you into Etzel's land."
Many a shield and helmet were soon shivered by his hand.

The vessels now lay ready, many a knight was there ;
On board they quickly carried what raiment they should wear ;
Right busily they stirred them till the night drew on.
From their homes they parted with mirth and cheery tone.

On the grass they set up tents and canopy
By the Rhine's fair border where Obdach you might see.
Gunther's wife so lovely prayed him to tarry there ;
Once more that night embraced she her loving husband dear.

The sound of flutes and trumpets at early morning rang
The break of day to welcome,—quickly each upsprang.
He who his love had with him kissed her gently there ;
Many a wife in Hunland this parting soon must share.

The sons of fair Dame Ute had with them a man
Who was brave and trusty ; as they their course began
Spake he to the Princes in secret conference ;
He said : " Fain must I sorrow that this journey you com-
 mence."

Rumolt was he named, a Knight of mettle rare.

"Who of the country," said he, "and people shall have care?
That from you Recken no one pervert their faithful mood!
This message of Chriemhilda's seems to me not good."

"Take you the land," said Gunther, "in charge, also my son,
And serve the ladies kindly, so shall my will be done.
If you see any weeping comfort their hearts and cheer:
From the Lady Chriemhild we have no harm to fear."

The horses now stood ready for the Princes and their train;
Many a loving parting with kisses fond was ta'en
By those who with stout courage in soul and body shone:
Many a wife so tender for that shall soon bemoan.

As now the swift Recken to their horses strode,
Many a fair lady in deep sorrow stood.
That they did part for ever their sad hearts did foretell
When some great grief cometh it is with no one well.

The swift Burgundian Recken their course did now begin:
Then thro' all the country a moving sight was seen
On either side the mountain were weeping wife and man.
Yet when they once had started they cheerily led the van.

The Nibelungen heroes with the rest were joined,
Clad in a thousand hauberts: they had left behind
Many a lovely lady whom they saw nevermore.
Siegfried's cruel murder had grieved Chriemhilda sore.

By the Main-stream's border upon their journey then,
Up thro' East Franconia, rode King Gunther's men.
Hagen was their leader, therein well versed was he;
Dankwart was their marshal, the Knight of Burgundy.

As they from East Franconia to the Schwanfeld rode,
In sooth one well might know them by their bearing proud,
The Princes and their Recken, these heroes of renown !
Upon the twelfth morning to the Danube they came down.

In front of all the others Von Troneg Hagen rode ;
He held the Nibelungen well to their stalwart mood.
He swung him from his saddle, the brave Knight to the ground,
Then in haste his charger to a tree he bound.

The flood was high swollen, no vessel was in sight,
The Nibelungen heroes were in sorry plight
How they should get over ; the water was too broad.
From their steeds dismounted knights many on the sward.

"Some mischance," quoth Hagen, "may befall thee here,
Monarch of the Rhineland ; thyself must be aware
The water is high swollen, too mighty is the flood :
This day I fear our losing many a Ritter good."

"What dost counsel, Hagen ?" the Monarch answer made ;
"For sake of your high honour make us not more afraid.
The ford you shall seek for us all this region through,
So that we hence may carry our steeds and raiment too."

"I am not yet," quoth Hagen, "so weary of my life,
That I should seek to drown me in this water's strife :
By my hands shall haply many a man be slain
In King Etzel's country ; much joy in that I'll gain.

"Stay here by the water, ye haughty Ritter good,
Myself will seek some boatman to bear us o'er the flood,
Who will bring us safely into Gelfrat's land."
Then did the sturdy Hagen take his good shield in hand.

Clad was he in bright armour ; his buckler he did bear ;
His helmet safely fastened shone like the morning fair ;
Slung upon his harness a weapon broad was seen,
Which at both its edges was of grimmest temper keen.

Up and down he wandered seeking a ferryman ;
He heard the splash of waters, — to listen he began :
By a lovely fountain many mermaids were
Bathing in the streamlet to cool their bodies fair.

Hagen, these perceiving, would secretly draw near ;
They plunged into the water when of him they were 'ware.
That they had escaped him gladdened them enow ;
He took from them their raiment ; no harm he would them do.

Then called to him a merwife, Hadburg, so named was she :
" Hagen, noble Ritter, rede you now will we,
If in return our raiment to us again you give,
How upon this journey with the Huns you shall thrive."

Like to birds they flitted before him on the flood.
Their knowledge of things hidden seemed to the hero good ;
The more he therefore trusted what they might foretell.
What he began to ask them they answered him right well.

She said : " You may ride safely into King Etzel's land ;
Therein my troth and pledging for my good word shall stand.
Into a foreign country did heroes never go
With such princely honour, in truth I tell you so."

The saying gladdened Hagen, even to his heart's core ;
Their clothes again he gave them, tarry he would no more.
When their wondrous raiment they had ta'en in hand
He learnt first the true meaning of the journey to Etzel's land.

Then spake another mermaid, Siegelind named was she :
" Hagen, child of Aldrian, now be warned by me.
For the clothes' sake my cousin deceitful speech has made :
If to the Huns thou comest, foully thou'lt be betrayed.

" Turn ye again swiftly, while time is yet to spare,
Since ye gallant heroes therefore invited are,
That you all may perish in King Etzel's land :
Those that journey thither take death in their hand."

Then again spake Hagen : " Ye trick me without need ;
How then should it happen that we all for dead,
Thro' some secret hatred, with the Huns remain ?"
Then to the Degen told they the story full and plain.

Outspake again the mermaid : " It must indeed so be ;
Of you Degen no one his home again shall see,
Save King Gunther's Chaplain—that is to us well known,
He shall return safely to Gunther's land alone."

Then spake the sturdy Hagen—a wrathful man was he :
" Such tidings to my Masters were I loth to say,
That in King Etzel's country we all must lose our life ;
Yet show us o'er the water, thou wise all-knowing wife."

She said : " Will naught dissuade thee, wilt on this journey fare ?
Go, look across the water, a ferry-house is there ;
Therein there dwells a boatman, no other do we know."
The tale that he had asked for believed the Degen now.

Still to the troubled hero called the mermaid white :
" Now wait," she cried, " Sir Hagen, you are too hasty quite ;
The news you well may gather as thro' the land you fare :
The ruler of these marches, *Eles* as name does bear.

" His brother's name is Gelfrat, he is a hero bold,
A Bavarian ruler ; do not too lightly hold
Your passage thro' his marches ; guard yourselves right well.
With the boatman also you must discreetly deal.

" He is of such grim temper success you will have none,
Unless with his master you have acquaintance shown.
Should he take you over give him an ample fee ;
The guardian of this country and Gelfrat's friend is he.

" And if in time he comes not then call across the flood,
And say your name is Amelrich ; he was a Degen good,
Who for his foemen's hatred out of this land did clear :
So will you rouse the boatman when he that name does hear."

The proud and haughty Hagen thanked the mermaid fair.
Silent he then remained, no word more spake he there ;
Then went he to the water down upon the shore,
Where on the side opposing a ferry-house he saw.

To call began then loudly the Degen o'er the flood :
" Now take me over, boatman," cried the Ritter good,
" For pay I this will give you, a clasp all golden red ;
Know that to cross this river I have in truth great need."

His offer brought no service from the rich ferryman ;
Seldom from any passer had he payment ta'en,
Also were his servants just as proud in mood.
So yet stood Sir Hagen on this side the flood.

So lustily he called that all the river rang
With the hero's shouting—it was so full and strong :
" Take me, Amelrich, over ; it is I, Elia's man,
Because of my stern foemen from this land I ran."

Upon his sword high poised the bracelet he did hold,
Lovely it was, and glancing shone the bright red gold ;
This for whoe'er should row him across to Gelfrat's land.
Then took the haughty boatman himself the oar in hand.

Now was this same boatman all so newly wed.
The lust for great enrichment has often badly sped ;
Hagen's red gold bracelet he had thought to own ;
His death by grimmeſt sword cut from the Knight he won.

The ferryman pulled stoutly, and to the strand drow near.
He whose name was given, when he did not appear,
Dark grew his mood and wrathful ; when he did Hagen ken,
With fierce unruly temper to the Knight spake he then :

" Yourself you well may christen by name of Amelrich,
Yet if my eyes mistake not you are but little like.
By father and by mother a brother he was of mine ;
Now that you have deceived me here you shall remain."

" Not so, for love of heaven !" Hagen made answer there ;
" I am a foreign Ritter, have other knights in care ;
Now take what I did offer in friendly payment due,
And pull us quickly over ; much bound I'll be to you."

Then again spake the boatman : " That cannot be so.
There is of my dear Masters many a bitter foe ;
Therefore I ferry over no stranger to their land.
If you your life do value now step out on the strand."

" Nay, say not so," quoth Hagen, " right mournful is my mood ;
Take from me in payment this golden bracelet good,
And ferry us well over, a thousand steeds and men."
Replied the wrathful boatman : " That will I never then.

His oar the boatman lifted, broad it was and strong,
And fiercely struck at Hagen ; did him such grievous wrong
That in the boat he staggered downwards on his knee.
Other such wrathful boatman ne'er did the Troneger see.

To anger yet still further the unwelcome guest he swang
His oar so stout and weighty that it in pieces sprang
Upon the head of Hagen—he was a sturdy wight :
Natheless had Elsa's boatman small profit from that fight.

With grimest fiercest temper Hagen turned him round
To where was hung his scabbard ; his sword he quickly found ;
He smote the head from off him, on the ground threw it there.
Soon of all these doings did the Burgundians hear.

Now at this very moment when he the boatman slew,
The boat whirled to the torrent ; he had enough to do
Ere he could force it shorewards, to weary he began ;
A mighty strength thus showed stout King Gunther's man.

He sought again to turn it with many a lusty stroke,
Till the oar so weighty in his strong hands broke.
He strove to reach the Recken who waited on the strand ;
No oar he now had left him ; how quickly his deft hand

Made splice with thong of buckler ! It held and just no more.
Right over 'gainst a forest he drove the boat ashore.
There he found the Princes, who on the strand did wait ;
Many a chosen Degen came down the Knight to meet.

A hearty greeting had he from the swift Ritter good ;
As they the boat surrounded they saw the stains of blood
From the wound so fearful when he the boatman slew :
Questioned by the Degen was Hagen then enow.

When the Monarch Gunther the pool of blood did see
In the boat still reeking, swiftly then spake he :
‘ What has then, Sir Hagen, come of the ferryman ?
With your strength so mighty his life you well have ta'en.”

With crafty speech he answered : “ When I the boat did find
To a wild willow fastened, my hand did it unbind ;
Never any boatman this day my eyes did see,
So has no one therefore met with harm from me.”

Then spake from the Burgundians Gernot the Degen true :
‘ This day of my dear comrades the loss I well may rue,
Since we here no boatman on the stream can find ;
How we shall cross over troubles much my mind.”

Loudly then cried Hagen : “ To the boat's floor move,
Ye servants, all the baggage ; methinks I yet may prove
The very best of boatmen on Rhine to be found ;
Safely I'll bring you over into Gelfrat's ground.”

That they the more quickly might cross o'er the flood,
They bound the steeds together ; their swimming was so good
That not one was missing, lost in the mighty stream—
Some adown were driven whom fatigue o'ercame.

The boat was rudely fashioned, strong enough and broad,
Five hundred men and over came easily on board,
With their arms and baggage, to cross the seething flood ;
At the oars were bending many a Ritter good.

In the boat they carried their gold and all their state,
So that on this Court journey for means they need not fret.
Hagen steered them over, he brought them to the strand ;
Many a gallant Recke came to the unknown land.

First a thousand Degen he deftly ferried o'er,
Also his own Recken, after these came more,
Full nine thousand servants—all these he brought to land :
All that day small resting had the bold Troneger's hand.

As he now thus safely brought them o'er the flood,
Of that tale bethought him the swift Degen good,
Which had been foretold him by the wild merwife :
This to the King's Chaplain went anear his life.

Amid the sacred baggage the worthy Priest did stand,
On the holy relics resting with his hand :
Small good these did bring him when Hagen saw him near.
The God-forsaken Pastor suffered great trouble there.

With sudden grip he ceased him and hurled him o'er the side.
" Hold ! Sir Hagen, hold ! " full many of them cried.
Upasprang with wrathful temper the young Geiselher ;
Yet would the Knight not leave him till he had slain him there.

Then spake from the Burgundians, Gernot the stainless Knight:
" How will it serve you, Hagen, the death of this poor wight ?
Had any other done it, it should have worked him woe ;
How has the Priest offended that you should hate him so ? "

Stoutly swam the Pastor ; to escape yet trusted he,
If any one would help him ; alas ! that could not be,
For the sturdy Hagen, wrathful was his mood,
Thrust him to the bottom : that seemed to no one good.

When now the poor Pastor saw no help near,
From the boat he floated ; sore trouble smote him there.
When all his strength had left him helped him then God's hand.
So that he safe returned back again to the land.

There stood the poor Chaplain and shook his garments dry.
By this now knew Hagen how true the prophecy,
Of deadly doom and certain, told by the wild merwife.
He thought : " Then all these Degen shall lose both body and
life."

When the boat was unladen and they had borne away
What to each belonged in the three Princes' pay,
Hagen to pieces struck it and threw it in the flood ;
At this greatly wondered the Roeken brave and good.

" Why do ye that, brother ? " Dankwart to him spake,
" How shall we here get over when return we make ?
When from Hunland coming homeward ride will we ? "
Not yet told him Hagen that no return should be.

Then spake Von Troneg Hagen : " I did it with forethought,
So that if any eoward we to this land have brought,
Seeking to run from us prompted by his heart's need,
He amid these waters to shameful death may speed."

When now Gunther's Chaplain saw the boat destroyed,
Across the whirling waters he to Hagen cried :
" Base murderer, what harm then have I to you e'er done,
That a guileless Pastor you thus should seek to drown ? "

For answer gave him Hagen : " Let your talking be.
By my good faith it grieves me you have escaped free
Here out of my clutches, that shall you surely know."
Then spake the poor Chaplain : " Great thanks to God I owe.

" I fear you truly little, of that be well assured :
Fare you towards the Hunland, I'll to the Rhine-board.
God grant that you never to Worms may come again—
That is my heart's desiring : my life you near had ta'en."

With them one did journey out of Burgundy,
A very noted Degen, Volker named was he.
He spake in merry fashion, as prompted his bold mood ;
Whatever Hagen counselled seemed to Volker good.

The horses now stood ready, the sumpters laden well ;
Thus far upon their journey no evil them befell
Which had caused them trouble, save for the King's Chaplain :
On foot he for the Rhine-track to seek was now full fain.

TWENTY-SIXTH ADVENTURE

How Dankwart slew Gelfrat.

WHEN they were now all landed together on the strand,
Asked the Monarch Gunther : " Who then through this land
The right way will show us that we go not wrong ? "
Spake the stalwart Volker : " Let that to me belong . "

" Take good advice , " quoth Hagen , " be it squire or knight ,
Let us keep well together ; that seems both good and right .
A tale of direful import from me you now must learn :
To Burgundy we never shall again return .

" This told me two merwomen at early morn this day ,
That go back should we never ; now list to what I say :
Arm ye well , ye heroes , if the danger we may ward ;
We shall find sturdy foemen , and must therefore be on guard .

" I thought these wise merwomen in falsehood found might be ;
Not one , so they told me , his home should ever see
Again , of all our party , save only the Chaplain ;
Therefore I so gladly this day would have him slain . "

From troop to troop these tidings flew round far and near ;
Then were gallant Degen seen to blanch with fear ,
As sorrow on them fastened for such cruel death ,
Upon this courtly journey : that brought them bitter scathe .

Now were they o'er the river opposite Moringen,
Where the Elsa-boatman had to death been done.
Then again spake Hagen : " If ever I did win
Upon my road a foeman, here he will be seen.

" Early on this morning the ferryman I slew.
By this the news has reached them, so haste and buckle to ;
If Gelfrat and Elsa bethink them to withstand
The passage of our troopers, they may fare badly at our hand

" Shun the fight they will not, that know I, they are bold,
Therefore shall you your horses to quiet pacing hold,
That it not seem to any we on the road would fly."
" Thy counsel will I follow," Geiselher did reply.

" Who now will show our party the way thro' this country ?"
Said all : " That shall Volker, well acquaint is he
With the roads and byways, the bold Fidelere."
Before they yet could call him he drew all armed near.

The brave Fiedelspieler had his helmet on ;
With brilliant hue all glistening his coat of armour shone,
Upon his lance was flying a standard all blood-red.
Soon came he, with the Princea, into dire need.

By this time had the tidings to Gelfrat quickly flown,
That slain was his boatman ; also was it known
To the mighty Elsa ; sorely grieved were both.
They summoned all their heroes, who came nothing loth.

In a short time, therefore, now hear me further tell,
Came to meet them riding, with hostile purpose fell,
In strong array of battle, a formidable band,
Full seven hundred Degen at Gelfrat's command.

As now these grim foemen to draw near began,
Their masters, who were leading, were scouring o'er the plain
After the valiant strangers ; they sought for vengeance high :
Of their friends full many should soon there buried lie.

Hagen, the stout Troneger, had it now designed
(How could his friends ever a better leader find ?)
That he should guard the rear with his chosen men,
And his brother Dankwart ; that was gladly seen.

The day by this had faded, swiftly the light withdrew ;
Much feared he for the dangers which round his friends he knew.
They rode, beneath their bucklers, thro' Bavarian land ;
On these soon had the heroes an onset to withstand.

On both sides the roadway, and also in their rear,
They heard the tramp of horses ; the troopers hasted there.
Then spake the gallant Dankwart : " Upon us comes the foe ;
Fasten well your helmets, that will be wise, I trow."

Upon the ground they halted, since that must be so ;
They saw amid the darkness the gleam of armour show.
No longer might keep silence the Knight of Troneg there :
" Who tracks us on this highway ! " so rang his challenge clear.

To whom bold Gelfrat answered, Lord of Bavaria :
" We seek here our foemen upon whose track we are ;
Who 'twas this day I know not that has my boatman slain :
He was a stalwart Degen, to mourn him I am fain."

To whom Von Troneg Hagen : " Was the boatman thine ?
He would not take us over, the blame alone is mine ;
'Twas I that slew the Recke, 'tis true my need was great,
At his hands a grim death full nearly had I met.

"For hire I did him offer gold and raiment bright,
That he should take us over to thy land, Sir Knight,
But he was so wrathful that he struck me down
With his oar so mighty : fierce then my temper shone.

"My sword I quickly reached for his anger to restrain,
With a swift stroke I felled him ; so was the boatman slain.
I stand here at your service, if it seem to you good."
To fight they swiftly hastened ; right angry was their mood.

"Well knew I," answered Gelfrat, "when here would journey
through
Gunther and his vassals, that we some wrong should rue
From Von Troneg Hagen. He shall pay it with his life ;
For the slaughter of our boatman good surety he shall give."

Gelfrat and Hagen couched their lances then
Full on the other's buckler, wrathful was their mien ;
Klaa and Dankwart in full career did meet
To prove each other's metal, the shock of strife was great.

When by stalwart heroes was keener contest shown !
In the furious onset Troneg's Knight was thrown
From his steed all headlong thro' Sir Gelfrat's might ;
Broken was his breastplate ; ne'er had he known such fight.

Amongst their followers also the crash of spears outrang ;
Troneg's Knight fully swiftly from the ground upsprang,
Where upon the greenward his foe had him o'erthrown,
Then first against Sir Gelfrat his anger fierce was shown.

Who kept to their saddles is unknown to me.
Gelfrat and Hagen one on the sward might see
Coming from their horses, eager for battle there.
Helped them, too, their comrades, as they the fight could share.

Bitterly did Hagen upon Gelfrat spring,
The shield of the Troneger did the Margrave fling
From his grasp down under so that the fire flew.
Then was he slain full nearly, Gunther's vassal true.

With loud voice he shouted to Sir Dankwart there :
" Help me, dear brother, a sturdy Knight has here
With his strength o'ercome me, and my life will take."
Answered the brave Dankwart : " An end of him I'll make."

Swift sprang the Degen nearer and struck him a fierce blow
With his keen-edged weapon, which did lay him low.
Vengeance then did Elsa seek for Gelfrat's death,
Yet must he and his troopers depart with grievous scathe.

Slain was the Knight, his brother, wounded himself he found,
Full eighty of his Degen lay upon the ground
A prey to the grim Monarch ; fain must the hero yield,
And let King Gunther's people all swiftly leave the field.

As the Bavarian Recken on the ground gave way,
One heard the blows resounding from the fearful fray ;
Hagen's troopers harried their foemen in the rear.
They who their safety valued made off right swiftly there.

Amid the hot pursuing Dankwart the Degen cried :
" Let us again returning to our highway ride,
And let us forward journey, our foes with blood are wet.
To our friends let us hasten, truly I counsel that."

When they now were gathered where the fight had been,
Said Von Troneg Hagen : " Friends, let it be seen
Who of us are missing and who are lost this day,
Through Sir Gelfrat's anger in this bloody fray."

Four of their troop are wanting, the loss they fain must bear ;
Their fate was well avenged, around them slain lay there
Bavarians a hundred, or it might have been more.
The Tronegers found their bucklers clouded and thick with gore.

A gentle gleam of moonlight thro' the clouds did break ;
Then again spake Hagen : " Let us no mention make
To my dear Masters of what has happened here ;
Let them till the morning be from trouble clear."

As from the fight the Degen together came again,
Of fatigue the troopers set them to complain :
" How long shall we be riding," asked many a one.
Spake the gallant Dankwart : " Quarters here find we none ;

" You must all keep the saddle till daylight does appear."
Volker, the swift Degen, who had the troop in care,
Asked then of the Marshal : " Where shall we turn in,
That our Lords and horses some needed rest may win !"

To whom the gallant Dankwart : " That can I not yet say ;
Rest ourselves we cannot until the dawn of day,
Where we then may find us we must lay down on the sward."
Troubled were full many when they that had heard !

Thus unobserved they waited all with red blood wet,
Till the sun uprising with bright beams did greet
The morning on the hill-tops. When now the King did see
That they had been fighting, a wrathful man was he :

" How now then, friend Hagen, is your scorn so great
Of help that we could give you that you fight so late,
With harness blood-beapattered ? Who then has this done ?"
He answered : " Elsa did it, he the attack begun.

"To avenge his boatman did he us pursue ;
The hand of my good brother then Sir Gelfrat slew.
Attack us, too, did Elsa, but he has badly sped ;
Of his men a hundred, of ours but four, lie dead."

Tell you now I cannot where they resting found.
Known was it to the people in all the country round,
That the Burgundian Princes to the Court drew near ;
Soon afterwards at Passau they met with better cheer.

The uncle of the Princes, the Bishop Pilgerin,
Joyfully heard the tidings that so many Recken keen
Were coming with his nephews to visit in the land ;
That he right gladly saw them they soon did understand.

A good reception had they from friends upon the road,
Yet they could not in Passau all find house and board ;
They must across the water. An ample field they found,
Where tents and handsome awnings rose quickly from the ground.

They had there to tarry for one livelong day,
And for the night also. What sumptuous cheer had they !
Then from thence they journeyed into Rüdiger's land ;
In a few hours the tidings had there come to hand.

When the travel-weary could look now for repose,
And upon Rüdiger's country the troop began to close,
They found upon the marches, fast asleep, a man,
From whom Von Troneg Hagen a sturdy weapon wan.

Eckewart so was named this same Ritter good ;
He found himself for certain in somewhat piteous mood,
That thro' the heroes' journey he had lost his sword.
Rüdiger's border marches seemed scantily held in ward.

"Woe's me to be thus shamèd," Eckewart loud did cry,
"Bewail must I now sorely this ride from Burgundy !
With the loss of Siegfried did all my sorrow grow :
Alas ! my Lord Rûdeger, how have I failed thee now !"

Well heard Von Troneg Hagen of the Recke's need ;
His sword he did return him, with it six links gold red :
"Take these, Sir Knight, as token that thou wilt hold me dear
Thou art a valiant Degen alone to tarry here."

"For thy gift God reward thee," Eckewart made reply,
"Yet does this Hunnish journey trouble me mightily.
By your hand slain was Siegfried ; still do they bear you hate :
See that you are well guarded, truly I counsel that."

"Now, may God protect us," Hagen made reply,
"But of care no other does on these Degen weigh,
Than as to our quarters, for the Princes and their train,
Where we in this country this night may rest obtain."

"Our horses are all jaded by the long weary way,
Our victuals are exhausted," Hagen did further say ;
"Naught can we find to purchase,—of some host have we need
Who, out of his heart's kindness, would give us this day bread."

Then again spake Eckewart : "A host to you I'll show,
Such that amongst you no one like entertain shall know
In any other country, as shall you here betide,
If you gallant Degen will to Rûdeger ride."

"He dwells nigh on your road, the best in every part
That e'er did own a dwelling ; virtue springs from his heart,
As from the grass the flowers in the sweet month of May,
And can he but serve heroes, so is he blithe and gay."

Then spake the Monarch Gunther : " Will you my Envoy be,
Whether my dear friend Rüdiger, for the love he beareth me,
Will give me entertainment, and those in my train ?
Reward you will I ever as far as best I can."

" Thy Envoy am I gladly," Eckewart made reply.
With right willing service he set out on his way,
And all that there had happened he told to Rüdiger,
To whom more welcome tidings came not for many a year.

To Bechlaren a Degen was riding with hot haste,
Well known he was to Rüdiger ; he said : " Over the waste
Eckewart the Knight is coming, subject of Chriemhild fair."
Already he bethought him some foes had wronged him there.

Before the portal went he, where he the Envoy found,
Who took his sword from scabbard, and swung it gaily round ;
The tidings which he carried he did not long conceal,
To his host and hostess he did them soon reveal.

He spake then to the Margrave : " I come at the command
Of my good lord Gunther, of Burgundian land,
And Geiselher his brother, and eke Gernot too,
All these noble Recken send you their service true.

" The same does also Hagen, and Volker the brave Knight,
With eager hearty fealty ; also I tell you right,
What message the King's Marshal that I should give you bade :
Brave men there are full many who your shelter need."

To whom the gallant Rüdiger replied with friendly smile :
" Glad am I of the tidings, that King Gunther will
Have need of my poor service ; ready am I for that.
If they my house will visit my joy will then be great."

"Dankwart the King's Marshal bade me to you say,
Who, to this your dwelling, would draw nigh to-day :
Sixty stalwart Recken, and a thousand Ritter good,
With nine thousand servants." Then was he merry in mood.

"Such guests are very welcome," spake Sir Rüdger,
"That the noble Recken should come to see me here,
For whose service seldom could I a kindness show :
Be it friend or servant ride forth to meet them now."

They hastened to their horses, squire as well as knight ;
Whate'er their lord commanded they thought it naught but right.
Their hospitable offers sped thus quicker on the way ;
Yet knew not of it Gotelind, who in her chamber lay.

TWENTY-SEVENTH ADVENTURE.

Rüdeger receives Gunther and his Knights.

WITHIN now went the Margrave where he did find the twain,
His wife and lovely daughter. To them he did explain
All the gladsome tidings which he had heard that day ;
And how their Lady's brothers would stay there on their way.

" My loved and very dear one," Sir Rüdeger then said,
" A good reception shall you give these Princes dread,
When they, with their attendants, pass to the King's Court here ;
Gunther's vassal, Hagen, you shall greet too with kind cheer.

" With them one is coming who is Dankwart named,
Another is called Volker in all high honour famed.
These six salute with kisses, you and my daughter too,
And with all gentle bearing to these knights be kind and true."

That promised him the ladies ; gladly they did prepare ;
They sought from out their presses much noble raiment rare,
Wherein they did attire them the stranger knights to meet.
One saw these lovely ladies busy early and late.

None would seek there in vain ;
Around their heads was banded a fair golden chain,
Like a rich wreath woven, so that their lovely hair
Should not by winds be ruffled ; graceful and bright they were.

To such gentle duties leave we the ladies now.
By this time a swift horseman o'er the land did go,
From Rüdiger's companions to where the Princes lay :
In the Margrave's country reception good had they.

When now the noble Margrave saw them coming near,
To his guests so dear-loved cheerily spake he there :
" My lords, ye are right welcome, and those in your train ;
Here in this my country ye are gladly seen."

Thanked him then the Roeken, in good faith without guile.
How he would befriend them he showed them soon right well.
Hagen had special greeting, known to him long was he ;
So also had Sir Volker, the Knight of Burgundy.

He welcomed also Dankwart. Then spake the Degen brave :
" If you here would keep us, who then a care will have
For all these our servants who are with us here ?"
" This night," replied the Margrave, " good rest I will prepare

" For you and your troopers. What to this land you may
Have with you brought hither, — steeds, silver, raiment gay, —
These will I guard so safely that nothing lost shall be,
Tho' 'twere but half a spur you nothing harmed shall see.

" Put up then, ye lads, your tents here in the field.
If anything is missing, payment for that I'll yield ;
Take off then the bridles, and let the horses go."
Such a host full seldom they before did know.

The guests had much rejoicing. When that all was done,
And the lords thence had ridden, the troopers lay them down
On the grass about them : good rest had they there ;
Never on this journey did they more softly fare.

The Margravine, so noble, with her daughter fair,
Went out before the Castle ; with them were standing near
Many a lovely lady, and many a beauteous maid ;
In much noble raiment and bracelets they were arrayed.

From their rich apparel glanced their jewels rare,
All far downwards reaching ; many they were and fair.
Then came the guests also, and sprang down on the ground :
Hei ! what courtly custom one by the strangers found !

Six and thirty maidens, and other ladies too,
Who, as the morning, fair and lovely were to view,
Forward came to meet them with many a stalwart man :
A kind and gentle greeting by fair dames then began.

The Margravine gave kisses to the Princes three,
As did her daughter also. Hagen was standing by.
Her father bade her kiss him : her eyes on him she threw :
He seemed to her so frightful away in fear she drew.

Yet had she to endure it, as her father bade ;
All changing was her colour, white and again red.
Dankwart she kissed also, and then the Fiedelmann ;
For his courage' sake he such fair greeting wan.

Then the Margrave's daughter took kindly by the hand
Geiselher, the young Prince of Burgundian land ;
Her hand, too, gave her mother to Gunther, the Degen keen ;
Then gaily with the heroes the ladies went within.

The host went with Prince Gernot into a spacious Hall,
The Ritter and the ladies found seats enough for all,
Then for the guests they hasted to serve around good wine ;
In truth our heroes never had better liquor seen.

Many loving glances were cast by Degen there
On Rüdiger's daughter, she was so wondrous fair.
In their hearts full many the lovely maiden wooed ;
Their love she well did merit, so noble was her mood.

They might dream as they pleased ; yet could it never be.
Here and there one noted the worthy Ritter spy
After the dames and maidens ; enough were sitting there.
Inclined much to the Margrave the noble Fiedeler.

For a while now they parted, as use was in the land ;
Then to their chambers mounted the knights and dames at hand.
The tables were set ready, in the Hall so wide,
Where the noble strangers were with due service plied.

Then went, her guests to honour, the noble Margravine
With them to the tables ; her daughter stayed within,
And tarried with her maidens, as she was wont to do :
That they no more should see her the knights did sorely rue.

When they now had eaten, and drunk their fill withal,
The maidens fair were ushered again into the Hall.
In light and merry converse ready they were to share,
Therein was foremost Volker, the Knight of courage rare.

Outspoke then full frankly that same Degen true :
"Great and noble Margrave, God has given you
Truly all His mercies ; has given you too a wife,
Rich and of wondrous beauty—thereto a happy life.

"Were I now a Monarch," Volker spake again,
"And a crown did carry, I'd seek a wife to gain
Your fair and beauteous daughter ; to her inclines my mood :
Lovely she is in person, of noble heart and good."

Then answered him the Margrave : " How could that come true,
That a Monarch ever should my daughter woo !
We are here as strangers, I and my wife so dear ;
What helps them though great beauty does in the maid appear ? "

To whom spake quickly Gernot, the noble Degen good :
" And chose I now a dear one after my own heart's mood,
Such a bride would surely fill my soul with joy."
To whom with courteous usage Sir Hagen did reply :

" A wife shall now be taking our young Prince Geiselher ;
Of a race so noble is the Margravine here,
That I would gladly serve her, I and all my train,
If as a crowned Princess she in Rhineland would reign."

Truly seemed this saying to Rüdiger naught but good,
And also to Gotelinda ; glad they were in mood.
Then urged it all the heroes that she a bride should be
To Geiselher the noble : the King no shame could see.

If a thing must happen who shall say it No !
They bade the lovely maiden to the chamber go.
There they swore to give him the fair and blushing maid ;
To love her beautiful person his promise glad was said.

They dowered then the maiden with castles and oke land.
This with oath confirmed princely Gunther's hand,
And Gernot the Degen, it was accomplished so.
Then spake the wealthy Margrave : " I have no land to show.

" But in good faith ever will I hold them dear,
And of gold and silver I give my daughter here
What a hundred horses can now bear away,
That so this noble Rocke with honour please I may."

As old custom ruled, in circle round they drew
About the two betrothed ones. Many a young knight true,
With high and joyous spirit, stood them opposing there,
And to himself was thinking how happy were the pair.

When they began to question of the lovely maid,
If she would have the *Recke*, in part she seemed but sad ;
To take, yet thought she, nathelless, the brave and loving one,
She shamed her for the question, as many a maid has done.

Counselled her then her father that she should answer *Yes* !
And that she took him gladly : how swift he then did press
Her form with white hands loving, which he around her threw,
Geiselher the young ! Scant joy with him she knew !

Then spake the noble Margrave : " Gracious Princes mine,
When ye again returning shall journey to the Rhine,
As it so soon shall happen, then give I you the maid,
That you may take her with you." So was it agreed.

The mirth, which loud had sounded, must no longer flow.
They let the gentle maidens to their chambers go,
And wished the guests good slumber, till daylight did appear.
With food the best and ample their host did serve them there.

After breakfast taken they would thence away
To the Hunland country : " In that I say you nay,"
Spake the noble Margrave, " you yet shall tarry here ;
Long is it since I've welcomed guests to me so dear."

Then said Dankwart : " Lord Rüdiger, how could we here
remain :

Where would you find provisions, the bread and eke the wine,
That we must yet be needing for so many men ? "
When the Margrave heard that no more he did refrain.

“My dear lords,” he answered, “you shall not say me Nay,
I have provisions ample till the fourteenth day,
For you and all the servants who have come in your train :
Seldom yet King Etzel aught from me has ta'en.”

Howe'er they might decline it they must there abide
Until the fourth morning. Then also did betide,
Thro' the Margrave's kindness, the gifts that he would pay ;
He gave his guests rich presents, steeds, and trappings gay.

No longer could they tarry, they must journey thence :
Rüdeger the gallant knew not to spare expense,
Because of his great bounty ; what any one might crave,
He would take no refusal, such honour they did have.

Now before the portal the stalwart troopers brought
Good show of gallant horses ; stood waiting in the court
Many gallant Recken, with their shields in hand,
Since they now would journey into Etzel's land.

The host dispensed his presents to the Degen all
Before the noble Princes had come into the Hall :
Well might he with honour in high friendship live.
His fair and lovely daughter to Geiselher he did give.

Then to Gernot gave he a sword of temper rare,
Which afterwards in battle the Knight did nobly bear.
Well had the gift good wishes from the Margrave's wife ;
Yet through it Sir Rüdeger lost both body and life.

He gave next to King Gunther, the Knight without compare,
What the wealthy Monarch might with honour wear—
Though rarely he took presents—a trusty coat of mail.
Before the noble Margrave the King inclined him well.

Then begged the Lady Gotelind, well might she without shame,
Kind gifts also for Hagen ; as the King had the same,
So should he too not journey to the Court Tourney
Without some present given : the Knight did this gainsay.

"Of all that I have noted," Hagen then did speak,
"Nothing farther would I from here with me take
Than the shield that thither hangs upon the wall ;
That would I gladly carry to King Etzel's Hall."

When of this wish of Hagen's the Margravine did know,
Bringing to mind her sorrow, her tears began to flow ;
Grieving again she pondered on her Nidung's death,
Who had been slain by Wittich, which brought her woe and
scathe.

She said to the Degen : "The shield to you I'll give.
O would to God in heaven that he yet did live
Who once in battle bore it ! in fight his death he met.
Ever must I bewail him : my grief, poor wife, is great."

From off her seat uprose then the Lady Gotelind fair,
With her hand so lovely she took the shield down there,
And bore it to Sir Hagen, who took it in his hand.
Well might the gift with honour by the Recke stand.

A wreath of golden chasing on its surface lay :
Better shield had never seen the light of day.
Rich it was with jewels ; if any one had sought
To buy it at its value, 'twould a thousand marks have brought.

Then did Sir Hagen order the shield away to bear.
His brother Dankwart also did now in the court appear ;
To whom gave Rüdiger's daughter of raiment rich full store,
Which he with gallant bearing amongst the Hun knights wore.

All these costly presents which they did here receive,
Were, in sooth, but trifles, as you may well believe ;
It was their host's love rather, which all this kindness bred.
Yet did they grow so hostile that they must strike him dead.

By this, too, with his Fiedel, Volker, the hero bold,
Before the Lady Gotelind himself with grace did hold ;
He played with tones the sweetest, and sang a roundelay.
When he his leave was taking, as from Bechlaren he went his
way,

The Margravine then ordered they should a chest bring near.
Of rich and wondrous presents a tale you now shall hear :
She took therefrom twelve bracelets, and placed them in his
hand :

" These you hence shall carry," said she, " to Etzel's land.

" And for my love shall wear them yonder at the Court ;
When you are returning we will then be taught
How you shall have served me at the high Tourney."
Such feats as wished the Lady did the hero gay.

To his guests spake Rüdeger : " Your road will now safe be ;
I will myself go with you and from plunder keep you free,
So that upon the highway you may not be waylaid."
They brought the sumpter horses, and the loading quickly made.

To start their host was ready with five hundred men,
Equipped with steeds and housings. He led then forth his train,
For the courtly Tourney, in high cheery mood :
To Bechlaren returned none of those Ritter good.

With many tender kisses the host then farewell said ;
This did Geiselher also as his true heart bade.
They held the lovely ladies pressed fast in close embrace ;
Which soon must be lamenting, these maids of noble race.

Then on all sides the casements were open thrown amain ;
To their horses hasted the host with all his train.
Their hearts had some foreboding of the ending sad.
Were weeping many ladies and many a tender maid.

For their friends beloved many were weeping sore,
Whom they at Bechlaren would see never more ;
Yet cheerily they rode forth thence along the strand,
Downwards by the Danube to the Hunnish land.

Then spake to the Burgundians the Knight so bold and gay,
Rüdeger the noble : " No longer now I may
Conceal from you the tidings that we are Hunland near ;
Never has King Etzel welcomed guests so dear."

Thro' the Austrian country an Envoy swiftly rode ;
So was it to the people on all sides spread abroad,
That there came these heroes from Worms upon the Rhine.
All the King's retainers could not more pleased have been.

The Envoys now pressed forward with the tidings rare,
That with the Huns already the Nibelungen were.
" Receive them well," said Etzel, " Chriemhild, Lady mine ;
With honour great are coming these brothers dear of thine."

Then did the Queen Chriemhilda at a casement stand,
And looked down at her brothers as friend does at friend.
From her father's country she saw there many a man.
As this the King was 'ware of, to laugh for pleasure he began.

" Now well's me for this glad sight," Chriemhilda spake there ;
" Of new shields full many my friends bring with them here,
And coats of mail bright glancing : who now will take my gold,
And will my wrongs remember, him will I glad behold."

TWENTY-EIGHTH ADVENTURE.

How Chriemhilda received Hagen.

As now the Burgundians came into the land,
Knew of it the Berner, the veteran Hildebrand.
He told it to his master : how grieved he this did hear ;
Who begged him to receive well these knights so keen and yare.

Then bade the swift Knight Wolfhart the horses lead along ;
With Dietrich the Berner rode many Degen strong,
Who would the strangers welcome out upon the plain ;
Noble tents full many standing there were seen.

When Von Troneg Hagen saw them drawing near,
With careful speech then spake he to his masters there :
“ Uprouse ye from your seats now, ye knights of courage true,
And haste to meet these Recken, who would give you welcome due.

“ Thither comes an army that I well understand ;
Many swift Degen are there from the Amelung land,
Dietrich is their leader ; they are of metal high :
What service they may offer receive not scornfully.”

Then sprang from off their horses, as was meet and right,
With Dietrich the Berner, many a squire and knight.
To the guests then went they, where they the heroes found ;
With greeting kind they welcomed those from Burgundian ground.

When the Degen Dietrich saw them coming nigh,—
Now may you well hearken to what the Degen high
Said to the Rhine Princes : their journey gave him pain ;
He thought that Rüdiger knew it, and would have told them
plain

"Welcome are ye, my Lorda, Gunther and Geiselher,
Gernot and Hagen, noble Sir Volker,
And swift Dankwart also : know ye not aright ?
Chriemhilda weeps yet ever for her Nibelungen Knight."

"She may yet long be weeping," Hagen in answer said ;
"Many a year 'tis truly since her lord was dead.
The Hunnish Monarch Etzel may her the rather have :
Siegfried will come back never, he is long in his grave."

"As for the death of Siegfried, 'twere better left alone
While yet lives Chriemhilda there may harm be done."
So replied the Berner, Dietrich the Knight :
"Chief of the Nibelungen, now guard thyself aright."

"Why should I then guard me ?" the Monarch made reply ;
"Etzel sent us Envoys—how question them could I ?—
That we him here should visit, and ride into his land.
Many a message also came from Chriemhild's hand."

"I would now advise you," spake Hagen again there,
"That these tales and rumours to the end you hear
From the noble Dietrich, and these heroes good,
Whereby we may know clearly the Lady Chriemhild's mood."

Then went the three Princes amongst themselves to speak—
Gunther and Gernot, and eke Sir Dietrich :
"Now tell us, Sir Dietrich, noble Ritter good,
What you may know haply of the fair Queen's mood."

Then spake the Lord of Berne : "What more is there to tell,
Than that every morning with weeping and with wail,
I hear the Lady Chriemhild in pitiable tone,
To the great God of heaven strong Siegfried's death bemoan !

"Boots little now to reason," said the Knight so bold,
Volker the Fiedelspieler, "on what you have us told ;
Let us to Court be riding, and see there once for all
What to us swift Degen with the Huns will befall."

The bold Burgundian heroes rode thence to the Court ;
Proudly they came onwards as their country's usage taught.
To see Von Troneg Hagen many a stalwart Hun
Eager around was pressing—that might well be done.

This was anent the story heard once and again,
That he the noble Siegfried of Netherland had slain,
The strongest of all Recken, Chriemhild's husband true ;
Therefore at Court of Hagen much questioning there grew.

Strong-built was the hero, as we are well aware,
Broad of chest and shoulder ; in his raven hair
Was many a streak of silver ; long he was of limb,
And of noble carriage ; his visage stern and grim.

The Burgundian Degen had good quarters shown ;
Gunther's retainers lodged elsewhere in the town, —
That counselled the King's daughter, who hated him amain ;
Soon were these luckless troopers in their quarters slain.

Dankwart, Hagen's brother, was the Marshal there ;
His retinue King Gunther gave over to his care,
That he to their comfort and to their wants might see :
Took charge of them right gladly the Knight of Burgundy.

Chriemhild, the lovely lady, with her companions stood
Where she the Nibelungen might greet with treacherous mood ;
She kissed her brother Geiselher, and took him by the hand.
— the Troneger saw that he tightened his helmet's band.

"After such marked greeting," spake Sir Hagen there,
"May well in sooth bethink them these Degen swift and yare :
Reception have the Princes other than their train ;
An evil journey have we to this feasting ta'en."

She said : "Let those be welcome whom one is glad to see ;
For the sake of friendship no greeting here will be.
Say, then, what you do bring me from Worms upon the Rhine,
That a hearty welcome from me you would win ?"

"What idle tales are these, then," Hagen did retort,
"That to you by these Degen presents should be brought ?
Since you are known so wealthy, and of such power too,
With presents to the Hunmen what had I to do ?"

"As to these 'tales,'" said Chriemhild, "I must still question,
The Nibelungen Hoard—with that what have you done ?
It was my very own, as you are well aware ;
You should have brought it to me in Etzel's country here."

"Good sooth, my Lady Chriemhild, already many a day
Has passed and gone since I the Nibelung Hoard did see.
It was by my Masters sunken in the Rhine ;
There must it now for certain till the last day remain."

Then spake again the Lady : "I had me well bethought,
That little of it would you for me have hither brought,
Tho' it to me was given, and once was in my power ;
Sad days have I therefore, and many a bitter hour."

"I bring you then the devil !" Hagen answered there,
"In this my buckler have I quite enough to bear,
And also in my armour—this helm so fairly wrought,—
This sword my hand is holding ; therefore I bring thee naught."

"Think not," replied Chriemhilda, "I did the gold desire ;
I have enough for spending, and should it scarce require.
'Twas murder and foul plunder that you did put on me,
Therefore would I, the sad one, full requital see."

Then spake the fair King's daughter to the Recken all :
"You shall not your weapons carry into the Hall ;
Trust them to me, ye heroes, the best care shall be shown."
"Now in good sooth," said Hagen, "that shall ne'er be done."

"I crave not the honour, gentle Princess fair,
That you to my lodgings this my shield should bear,
Or other, my war-tackle,—you are a very Queen ;
That I myself should guard them my Sire's precept has been."

"Woe's me for this refusal !" answered then Chriemhild ;
"Why will not my brother and Hagen each his shield
Give over to my keeping ? Certain forewarned are they,
And knew I who had done it his life I'd take away."

To whom with speech of anger Sir Dietrich answered clear :
"'Tis I who have them warn'd, these noble Princes here,
And Hagen, and the brave knights in the Burgundian train ;
Thou devil's bride, I fear not aught thou canst do again."

At this rebuke Chriemhilda much abashed appeared ;
Dietrich's mood heroic bitterly she feared.
Swiftly away she turned her, no word more did she vent,
Only amongst her foemen a parting glance she sent.

Then by the hand each other the two knights did take,
The one Von Troneg Hagen, the other, Dietrich ;
With kindly speech and courteous the Knight of Bern did say :
"In sooth your journey hither brings me much grief this day."

"See what the lady also to you so lately spake."
Then said Von Troneg Hagen : "Let us then counsel take."
So they conversed together, the noble Degen twain ;
This saw the Monarch Etzel, who to ask began.

"Learn would I right gladly," the King did question make,
"Who may be that Recke whom Sir Dietrich
Has welcomed here so warmly ; he has a haughty mien :
Whate'er his Sire was called, he was well a Degen keen."

Then to the King in answer said one of Ohriemhild's train :
"He is the Knight Von Troneg, his Sire was Aldrian ;
How bright soe'er his raising, he is both grim and stern ;
That I no falsehood tell you, he lets you well discern."

"How should I then discover his mood to be so grim ?"
Of all the cruel cunning no word had yet reached him,
Which against her kinsmen the Queen did entertain,
So that not one from Hunland should return again.

"Well known to me was Aldrian,—subject he was of mine,
Much of praise and honour he with me did win ;
'Twas I myself did knight him, and took him in my pay ;
Since he was ever faithful he was right dear to me.

"Therefore concerning Hagen I know all at first hand :
Two noble children brought I hostages to this land—
He and the Spanish Walter ; they grew up beneath my eye ;
Hagen I sent again home, Walter with Hildegund did fly."

Such pleasant tales recalling, and what once had been,
His old friend the Troneger he had gladly seen,
Who in his youthful prowess did oft such service do :
Yet now in his manhood his dear friends many slew.

TWENTY-NINTH ADVENTURE.

Hagen will not rise before Chriemhilda.

THE two noble Recken did now their parting make—
Hagen Von Troneg, and Sir Dietrich.
Glanced then o'er his shoulder Gunther's worthy Thane,
At a knightly comrade whom he soon did gain.

He saw the Degen Volker, the gallant Fiedeler,
Standing by Geiselher. He besought him there
That he would go with him ; well knew he his bold mood,
And that he was in all things a Ritter brave and good.

They let the stranger Princes still by the courtyard stand.
The two were now seen going alone, and hand in hand,
Out beyond the enclosure to a vast palace near :
Of such high mettle were they, no insult did they fear.

Upon a bench they sate them, over against a Hall
That was the Lady Chriemhild's ; spacious it was and tall.
On their stalwart bodies their gleaming armour shone ;
Of those that saw them many had them gladly known.

At our fearless heroes the Hunnish Recken keen
Stared with gaping wonder, as they wild beasts had been.
Through the casement eyed them Etzel's haughty Dame :
On her lovely features a cloud of sorrow came.

O'er her wrongs she brooded ; to weep she then began,
Thereat were much astounded the knights in Etzel's train :
" What then had so quickly troubled her haughty mood ?"
Then said she : " That has Hagen, ye Recken brave and good."

Then spake they to the Lady : " How can that have been ?
In you a noble temper have we yet ever seen.
Whoe'er has been so daring that he this wrong has done,
Bid us now to avenge you—with death shall he atone."

" Him would I thank for ever who would avenge this wrong,
Whatever he might covet he should not want it long.
Upon my knees I beg you," so spake King Etzel's wife,
" Revenge me on this Hagen that he lose limb and life."

Upstart quick the Recken, sixty they were in all.
To win their Lady's favour they would before the hall
Have slain Von Troneg Hagen, the Knight of courage true,
And eke the Fiedelspieler : this they agreed to do.

When now the Queen perceived her band did small appear,
With wrathful mood thus spake she to the Degen there :
" From such an undertaking I bid you now abstain ;
With such a few ye may not with Hagen strife maintain.

" However strong and mighty Von Troneg Hagen be,
The Knight who sits beside him is stronger far than he,
Volker the Fiedelspieler, he is a man to fear ;
You may not to these heroes with so few draw near."

When they heard this saying uproar then yet more—
Four hundred Recken. In her heart full sore
Sought the dread King's daughter revenge for all her woe.
Thro' this did soon these Degen much scathe and sorrow know,

When now her troop well-armed standing round were seen,
To the stalwart Degen further spake the Queen ;
" A while you yet shall tarry and stand in quiet here ;
As Queen be-crowned now will I speak with my foemen there.

" So may yourselves be judges what to me has done
Hagen, Knight of Troneg, this King Gunther's man.
I know him for so daring, he will it not deny ;
So ask I now no further what may chance hereby."

Then saw the Fiedelspieler, Knight of courage rare,
The noble King's daughter from the steps draw near,
Which from the house descended. When he that had seen,
To his armed companion spake the Degen keen :

" See you now, friend Hagen, how draws near to hand,
She who, with false purpose, has bid us to this land.
Ne'er saw I Queen attended by so many men,
Sword in hand all ready their end by strife to gain.

" Know you too, friend Hagen, how the Lady hates you here,
Therefore I would advise you that you have a care
For your life and honour—that seems to me but good ;
As far as I can gather right stormy is her mood.

" Meseems they too are mostly stout and strong of limb ;
Who would his life be guarding let him be warned in time.
I see how on their bodies light coats of mail they wear ;
What all this betokens from no one do I hear."

To whom with scornful temper replied the fearless one :
" Well know I, friend Volker, 'tis for my sake alone
That they their bright weapons carry thus in hand ;
Nathless, for these I'll ride yet into Burgundian land.

"Tell me now, I pray you, think you to stand by me,
If they should attack me, these men in Chriemhild's pay.
Let me know that truly, as I to you am dear;
Ever in faithful service true heart to you I'll bear."

"Surely I will help you," replied the Fiedelmann.
"And saw I, us opposing, with all his armed train,
The Hunnish Monarch coming—until my life was out,
From your side would I yield me, thro' fear, never a foot."

"Now God in heaven reward you, noble friend Volker!
If you in fight stand by me for what more need I care!
With your help thus given, as I now understand,
These Roeken need be cautious how they come near to hand."

"Let us rise from our seats," Sir Volker spake again;
"See how she now comes near us,—she is yet a Queen;
When one to noble ladies does such honour do,
For sake of courtly custom, 'tis surely but their due."

"No so! if you love me," Hagen made reply;
"I would not have these Dogen bear the thought away
That I thro' fear was acting, and would escape devise;
From my seat I purpose for none of them to rise."

"That we thus await her befits us well, I trow,
Why should I do honour to one who is my foe!
No, that will I never while my heart does beat!
In all the world what care I for Chriemhilda's hate."

Then laid the desperate Hagen across his mailed thigh
A sword of grimmest temper, at whose hilt did lie
With sparkling ray a jasper than the grass more green.
Well remembered Chriemhild that it Siegfried's once had been

When she now knew the weapon, great was her grief indeed,—
Of bright gold was the handle, the scabbard tassels red.
Of her wrongs she bethought her, she 'gan to weep and moan :
Certain 'twas with such purpose Hagen had it done.

Then drew the swift Knight Volker nearer on the seat,
A sturdy Fiedelbogen¹ of mighty length and weight,
Like to a sword, truly, sharp and broad withal :
So sate the two brave Recken fearless before them all.

With dauntless front thus bore them these knights of high
 emprise,

As if from off their station they never more would rise
For any one whatever. Standing before their feet
Came the fair King's daughter and did them coldly greet.

She said : " Now tell me, Hagen, who sent for you here,
That you thus should venture amongst us to appear ?
You must well remember what you to me have done ;
Had good taste been your prompter you had left it well alone."

To whom retorted Hagen : " No one did send to me ;
Hither were invited of our Degen three ;
They were my lords and masters, I am in their pay :
On these Court journeys am I not used at home to stay."

She said : " Now tell me further why you have done that,
For which you have deserved that I should bear you hate ?
'Twas you that murdered Siegfried, my own husband dear,
For which until my life ends I must ever sorrow bear."

" It is enough," he answered, " what needs there more to say ?
I am in truth that Hagen, who did Siegfried slay,
The swift and cunning Degen : how heavily he paid
For scorn which Lady Chriemhild on Brunhilda laid !

¹ As to this sword fiddle bow, vide Carlyle's *Miscellanies*, vol. II. p. 231.

" Deny it that I will not, fair and wealthy Queen,
In all this wrong and evil 'tis I have guilty been ;
Let who will avenge it, be it woman or man,
Tho' I might fain deceive you, great wrong I have you done."

She said : " Hear that, ye Recken, how he confesses clear
My wrongs and his foul malice ; what shall befall him here,
Of that I ask no further of ye in Etzel's train."
The haughty-mooded Degen looked at each other then.

Had conflict then arisen so would one have seen,
How for the two companions great honour must have been ;
In the storm of battle that did oft appear,
Let who would assail them, of that they had no fear.

Then spake one of the Recken : " Why do ye look at me ?
What I whilom promised will now never be,
For no one's guerdon will I forfeit body and life ;
Here would fain mislead us the Monarch Etzel's wife."

Then spake thereto another : " Such also is my mood.
Not if she heaps would give me of red gold so good
Would I this Fiedelspieler to encounter care,
For those his rapid glances which I have noted here.

" This Hagen also know I since his early days ;
Of this Knight does rumour say great things in praise.
In two and twenty battles have I marked him well ;
Through him to many a woman, heart's-sorrow keen befell.

" He and his Spanish brother a fearless course did take,
When they here with Etzel their essay did make,
For love of the great Monarch. That has oft been so :
Therefore may we to Hagen fairly much honour show,

“At that time the Recke had but a few years told,
Yet were the lads already like those who now are old ;
He is now in full manhood, grim and stern of mien ;
He has, too, the sword Balmung, which he did foully win.”

Therewith it was decided,—no one sought the strife,
That was for the King's daughter at heart a bitter grief.
The Recken then departed—of death they were afraid
From the two Degen's hands ; in sooth they had good need.

“Now can we see clearly,” spake the Fiedelmann,
“That we have foes around us—they have told us plain.
Now let us to the Princes, and thence to the Court,
So shall no one venture our Lords in strife to thwart.

“So, out of fear, will many leave danger well alone,
Where friend by friend thus bravely together stand as one !
And when their prudence counsels that they should nothing do
They screen themselves with honour before they harm will rue.

“On, then, I will you follow,” Hagen did reply.
Then went the two bold Recken where the Degen gay
Still waiting their reception by the Court were seen.
Then did the stalwart Volker begin to call amain.

To the Princes spake he : “How long will ye stand there,
All crowded thus together ! ye should to Court repair,
And hear from King Etzel how his mind may be.”
Then were they quickly banded, the knights from all stain free

Dietrich the Berner took then by the hand
Gunther, the wealthy Monarch, of Burgundian land ;
Irnfried took Prince Gernot, the Knight so brave and keen,
And Rüdiger with Geiselher went to the Court within.

As thus, in such order, they did together pair,
Volker and Hagen parted no more there ;
Together would they battle even to the death,
Which brought to many a lady bitter tears and scathe.

There went with the Princes to the Court within,
Of their noble comrades a thousand Ritter keen,
Also sixty Recken, who had come with them to Court ;
These had from his country the stalwart Hagen brought.

Hawart and Iring, two Knights of courage rare,
Saw one with the Princes to the Court repair ;
Dankwart and Wolfhart, — a very trusty blade,
Staunch and useful service with the others made.

When now the Rhine Landlord to the Palace made his way,
Etzel, the wealthy Monarch, did no more delay :
From his seat upsprang he when he Gunther saw,
Such a hearty greeting 'twixt kings was ne'er before.

" To me ye are right welcome, Gunther and Gernot,
And Geiselher your brother ; your presence I have sought,
In friendship and true service, from Worms on Over-Rhine,
And all these your comrades, — ye are right welcome seen.

" A hearty welcome also shall ye two Recken share,
You most valiant Volker, and Sir Hagen there,
From me, and from my Lady, here in this our land ;
Many a message did she to the Rhine command."

Then spake Von Troneg Hagen ; " That understood we plain ;
And if I with my masters this journey had not ta'en,
So by myself would I have ridden to your land."
Then took the noble monarch his dear guests by the hand.

To chosen seats he led them, where he himself sate,
Then for the guests they poured out,—busily they did that,
In deep golden beekers, mead, morras,¹ and wine.
And to the foreign Degen with warm welcome did incline.

Then spake the Monarch Etzel : “ I will confess for sure,
That on this earth could nothing well have pleased me more,
Than that you, ye Recken, should have hither come,
Thereby will the Queen also her great grief entomb.

“ ’Twas aye to me a wonder, as I before have said,
Since of guests right noble so many here have sped,
That you ne’er have deigned into my land to ride ;
Now that I have seen you, my joy does full abide.”

To whom the gallant Rudeger, Knight of noble mood :
“ You should them gladly welcome, their hearts are true and good,
Well may my Lady’s brothers great honours here await :
They bring hither also many a sturdy knight.”

It was the time of evening when they did arrive
At Etzel’s Court so splendid. Seldom did one receive
Such fair and courteous greeting as on these was spent.
Now was it time or supper ; their Host to table with them went.

For his guests had never a Host shown fuller care ;
Of eating and of drinking enough they had to spare ;
Whatever they might wish for was right quickly found.
Many a wondrous story of the heroes circled round.

The wealthy Monarch Etzel had a building vast,
Raised with care and trouble, rich in costly taste ;
Lofty towers and palace, countless rooms in all,
In a mighty fortress, and with a noble Hall.

¹ “ *Morras*,” see Note in the Appendix.

THE SONG OF THE NIBELUNG.

Of great length was this fashioned, lofty too and wide,
Since so many Recken to seek him there had need ;
Of knights' companions, also, and twelve kings with their state,
And many worthy Degen, who there were wont to meet.

Ne'er before had Monarch such a noble train.
He lived thus with his subjects, without a grief or stain ;
Knightly play and tourney held the King so good
With bold and stalwart Degen—so high his courage stood.

THIRTIETH ADVENTURE

Bow Dagen and Volker kept watch.

THE day now had ended, night came on apace ;
The travel-wearied Recken had more care to face,
Where they might find resting and get them safe to bed.
For this inquired Hagen : answer was quickly made.

To their Host spake Gunther : " May God grant you success :
We would to sleep betake us if we your leave possess ;
We come, if so you bid us, with early morn again."
The Host sent to their slumber his guests with courteous mien.

On all sides be-crowded the stranger guests were seen ;
To the Huns outspoke then Volker, the Degen keen :
" What mean ye then, ye Recken, before our feet to press ?
If therein ye forbear not it shall cause you stress.

" With a bow-stroke so heavy strike will I here and there ;
He that has o'er a true love it shall cost her dear.
Now make way for us, Recken, in sooth that seems me good ;
Many are called Degen who lack the knightly mood."

As with such hot anger spake the Fiedelers,
Glanced the stalwart Hagen o'er his shoulder there ;
He said : " Good counsel gives you the keen Fiedelmann ;
Go you to your quarters, ye in Chriemhild's train.

"What ye are lusting after fits not now your turn ;
If ye would make beginning come with early morn,
And let us weary travellers have our rest to-day ;
Never yet was Degen more willing for a fray."

Their guests they then conducted into a spacious Hall.
There found they for the Recken ready prepared all,
Many costly couches long and broad enow.
Willingly would Chriemhild have worked them bitter woe.

Rich and handsome curtains of arras there did meet,
With light stuffs interwoven ; many a coverlet
Of silk from Arabia, the best that e'er could be,
With fair embroidered borders well pleasing to the eye.

Bed coverings were many of ermelin so white,
And of the blackest sable, 'neath which they the night
Might pass in rest and slumber till the dawn of day.
A Prince with all his people never softer lay.

"Woe's me for these lodgings !" spake young Geiselher,
"And woe, too, for my kinsmen who are with me here.
How fair soe'er my sister as guest would take me in,
From her hate much fear I we all our death shall win."

"Be not now o'ertroubled," spake Hagen the Knight,
"I myself as sentry will keep watch this night,
And will surely guard you till the break of day ;
Rest therefore without sorrow, let it come when it may."

To him they all inclined them and their thanks were paid.
To their beds they hastened, not long they then delayed
Before in heavy slumber the heroes brave were lain.
Hagen, the bold Degen, to arm him quick began.

Then spake the Fiedelspieler, Volker, the gallant Knight :
" If you do scorn not, Hagen, so will I this night
Watch with you as sentry till the day does break."
To whom with hearty thanks Hagen did answer make :

" Now praised be God in heaven, Volker, friend so dear,
In all my care and trouble I seek no other cheer
Save you alone, whatever my need may chance to be ;
Well will I repay you, from death we'll hold us free."

They clad them then right quickly in their armour bright,
In his hand his buckler took each sturdy knight :
From the house they went out and stood before the door,
Thus guarded they the sleepers, so true their hearts and sure.

Volker, the swift Degen, loosed then from his hand
His shield so stout and trusty, 'gainst the wall let it stand ;
Back again then went he where his Fidel stood,
Wherewith his friends he cheered, so noble was his mood.

Upon a stone he sate him before the open door—
Such a bold Fiedelspieler saw one ne'er before.
As the long-drawn tones so sweetly forth did swell,
The weary homeless Degen thanked Sir Volker well.

So full the strings resounded that all the Hall outrang,
In art and in power he was alike so strong ;
Sweeter and ever sweeter to play he then began ;
So played he into alumber many a careworn man.

When now they were all sleeping, and Volker that had seen,
In his hand his buckler the Degen took again,
And went out of the portal before the Hall to stay,
That he might guard the sleepers from those in Chriemhild's pay.

In the early watches it so happened there,
Volker, the bold Degen, saw glancing helms appear
Distant thro' the darkness : those in Chriemhild's train
Sought o'er the weary sleepers some evil chance to gain.

Before that Queen Chriemhilda sent her knights away,
She said : " When you shall find them, for God's sake careful be,
That you do slay no one save one man alone,
The base and perjured Hagen, the others let sleep on."

Then spake the Fiedelspieler : " Listen, Hagen, friend,
We'll bear this brunt together like true knights to the end.
I see men in armour before the house appear ;
Unless my thoughts mislead me they would attack us here."

" Hush, then," answered Hagen, " wait till they do come ;
Ere they will us discover many a helmet plume
Shall be shorn asunder by these weapons twain :
In evil case to Chriemhild shall they back again."

Of the Hunnish Recken one was soon aware
That the door was guarded ; quickly spake he there :
" What we here did purpose we must now give o'er ;
I see the Fiedelspieler stand the house before.

" Upon his head a helmet fair shining he does wear,
Of toughest, purest metal, of strength and finish rare ;
The links of his chain armour like a fire glow.
By him stands also Hagen ; they guard the sleepers so."

Back again they turned. When Volker that did see,
To his armed companion scornfully spake he :
" Now let me from this portal to these Recken go ;
From these men of Chriemhild's their news I fain would know."

^A Not yet, an if you love me," Hagen did reply.

"If you the house abandon, these swift knights so nigh
With their swords might bring you easily to such acathe,
That I were fain to help you, tho' to our friends 'twere death.

"While both of us, therefore, were busy with the fight,
What hinders but that of them two or three quickly might
This Hall with ease press into, and there such mischief do
To our friends the sleepers as we till death should rue."

To whom again spake Volker: "Well, then, so let it be,
That they of us were conscious we did right well see;
They cannot now deny it, these men in Chriemhild's train,
That to the guests they gladly would have faithless been."

Aloud then shouted Volker, with challenge swift and clear:
"Why go ye then thus armed, ye unknown Degen there?
Would ye ride to murder, ye men in Chriemhild's pay?
So take me as your helper and this my comrade gay."

No one gave him answer; wrathful was his mood:
"Fie! ye recreant cowards," said the Degen good;
"To murder us while sleeping were ye creeping round?
Such conduct in true heroes has seldom yet been found."

By this the tidings also to the Queen were brought,
That her plot had failed; with sorrow she was fraught.
Another scheme she harboured, so deadly was her spite.
For that full soon must suffer many a gallant knight.

THIRTY-FIRST ADVENTURE.

How the Princes went to Church.

"I AM so cool in harness," spake the Fideler,
"As if but little longer the night would tarry here ;
The morning breeze is stirring, it is not far from day."
Then wakened they full many who yet sleeping lay.

Now shone the lovely morning through the spacious Hall
To ask then began Hagen of the Ritter all,
If they to the Minster to the Mass would go ?
As is the Christian custom, the bells were pealing slow.

The sounds were all unequal ; no wonder that might be,
That Christians and heathens should not thus agree.
Then would they to the Minster, those in Gunther's train ;
All in haste uprising from their beds were :

Arrayed them then the Recken in raiment passing fair,
Such that never heroes could in Court appear
Robed in nobler fashion. This grieved Hagen sore ;
He said : " Ye would be wiser if ye your armour wore.

" These rumours that surround us ye surely understand ;
Therefore, instead of roses, take ye your swords in hand ;
Instead of jewelled beavers your shining helmets good,
Since we have such knowledge of Chriemhild's cruel mood.

"This day we must have fighting, from me ye that may hear.
Instead of silken vestments ye shall your gorgets wear ;
In place of your rich mantles take your good shields broad,
If any would assail you that ye stand well on guard.

"And now, my dear Masters, my friends, and all my men,
Go ye to the Minster willingly within,
And pour out to the good God your sorrow and your need,
For know that for a certain our death is nigh indeed.

"And do ye well remember what your past has been,
And stand before your Maker with pious heart and mien.
For I now must warn ye, ye knights of courage rare ;
God must direct it other, else no Mass again ye'll hear."

They went then to the Minster, the Princes and their band.
In the holy churchyard bade them quiet stand
The keen and wary Hagen, that they should not parted be ;
He said : "As yet knows no one what we here may see.

"Lay down then, my comrades, your shields before your feet,
And pay it back if any should you as foemen greet,
With death-wounds of the deepest, so Hagen does advise ;
So shall ye best discover how ye stand in their eyes."

Volker and Hagen then together went
Before the mighty Minster. To do this they were bent,
Since they to see were wishful whether the dread Queen
Would let them be o'ercrowded ; their wrath 'gainst her was keen.

Then came the Monarch Etzel and his wife so fair ;
Adorned was her body with richest raiment rare.
Stalwart Degen many one saw around her group ;
The dust high o'er them floated from Christmilda's troop.

When the wealthy Monarch saw all in armour stand,—
The Princes with the people, quickly he did demand :
“Why do I see my friends thus beneath their helmets go ?
Grieved were I by my true faith if any worked you woe.

“That would I well atone for as it seemed to you good.
If any one has wronged you in heart or e'en in mood,
I will, in sooth, soon show him how it grieveth me ;
Whatever you should ask me ready for that am I.”

For answer gave him Hagen : “No wrong we here do know ;
It is our Princes' custom that they armed should go
In any royal palace for three days' full space.
If aught to us had chanced we had sought Etzel's grace.”

While Hagen thus was speaking well heard the fair Chriemhild.
With what hate she the Degen 'neath her eyelids beheld !
Of her country's custom she would not tell them there,
Though she 'midst the Burgundians of it so long was 'ware.

How fierce the mood soever she did against them hold,
If any one to Etzel had the story told,
He would have given orders what should happen there :
In high and haughty humour all then silent were.

Now stepped with many people the fair Queen to the door ;
Then would the two Recken yield not her before,
Not two hands'-breadth even ; that irked the Huns to see.
So with the sturdy heroes to press on forced was she.

To Etzel's lords-in-waiting this appeared not good ;
Gladly had they the Recken stirred to angry mood,
If of the dread Monarch they had not been in awe.
So was there a great crowding, and yet nothing more.

HOW THE PRINCES WENT TO CHURCH.

As the service ended homewards they drew again,
Around them soon came trooping a mighty Hunnish train.
There was with Chriemhilda many a lovely maid ;
And well seven thousand Degen before the Queen did ride.

Chriemhild with her ladies at the casement sate
By the Monarch Etzel, gladly he saw that.
She wished to see them tilting, the knights of mighty fame :
Hei ! what foreign Recken before her presence came !

With the troopers also came the Marahal near ;
The brave and sturdy Dankwart himself had taken care
Of his Master's servants from Burgundian land :
The keen Knight found his horses well saddled to his hand.

As came now on their chargers the Princes and their train,
The strong and daring Volker to counsel them began,
That they should joust in tourney, as they were wont to do.
Then quickly did the heroes their practised riding show.

At Sir Volker's counsel no one, sooth, did fret.
The jousting and the shouting both alike were great.
To the spacious courtyard entered many a Thane :
Etzel and Chriemhilda saw it all right plain.

To the tilting came first six hundred Degen fleet,
Dietrichen's Recken, the stranger knights to meet.
With the Rhine-men would they in knightly play engage ;
If Dietrich would permit it the strife they fain would wage.

Hei ! what stalwart Degen were seen riding there !
The Knight of Bern, their master, soon the news did hear.
To joust with Gunther's troopers he did them forbid :
He spared thus his people, which irked him sore indeed.

As from the lists departed Dietrich the Berner's men,
Came there from Bechlaren those in Rüdiger's train,
Five hundred under armour, who past the Monarch rode :
At this grieved was the Margrave,—he had it not allowed.

Then rode the good Knight wisely through his troopers there,
And to his Degen said he : " Ye are well aware,
How in moody temper are King Gunther's men
If they would quit the Tourney it would please him then.

As from the lists departed the heroes undismayed,
Came next from Thuringen, as it has been said,
And from Denmark also, a thousand knights thereby :
From the spear-thrusts saw one many a splinter fly.

Irnfried and Hawart in the Tourney rode ;
They waited for the Rhine-men with courteous custom good.
In the jousting joined them those from Thuringen :
Pierced through with their lances was many a good shield seen.

Then came the Degen Blödel, three thousand strong his troop,
Etzel and Chriemhilda marked right well this group,
Since before them jointly took place the knightly play.
The Queen saw it right gladly, thro' hate for Burgundy.

Within herself she pondered how near strife it did go :
" Should any one be injured I could manage so
That it should turn to earnest ; on my enemy
I should then have vengeance and be from sorrow free."

Schretan and Gibecke in the Tourney rode,
Ramung and Hornbog, after their custom good.
They held well to the contest, the knights of Burgundy :
Over the palisading flew the splinters high.

All for the others' jousting 'twas but an empty sound.
With fierce thrusts on their bucklers, palace and hall around
Heard one loud re-echo through those in Gunther's train.
Much praise and great honour did his followers gain.

By this time grew the Tourney so furious and so great
That from the saddle-housings ran down the foaming sweat
From the sturdy horses, so did the heroes ride :
They tried the Hunsmen's mettle as high usage did provide.

Then spake the keen Knight Volker, the noble Fidelere :
"Too fearful are these Degen, they grip not with us near.
I heard it stated always they did hate us sore ;
Had the time but suited, the chance they'd have no more.

"Back then to the stables let the steeds be ta'en,"
Spake the Degen Volker ; "we'll ride a bout again
In the evening hours, when they shall arrive ;
And see if to Burgundians the Queen the prize will give."

Then saw they one come riding there so gracefully,
As in the Hunnish country no other like could be ;
He had been, peradventure, his lady love beside :
He rode bedecked as gaily as noble Ritter's bride.

Then out again spake Volker : "Can we thus undone leave ?
Yonder lady's darling must a thrust receive.
That no one here shall parry, it shall go near his life :
I ask not if that haply will anger Etzel's wife."

"Not yet ! if you love me," the King did quickly say,
"They would surely blame us if we commenced the fray :
Let the Huns begin it, that will be better seen."
All this time sat Etzel at the casement with the Queen.

"The jousting will I quicken," Hagen made reply ;
"Let these ladies witness, and all these Degen by,
How we do ride in Tourney, that should they well ken :
Small praise, I trow, is given to King Gunther's men."

Volker, the swift Degen, rode again to the strife,
Thereby much grief and sorrow he brought to many a wife.
Through the rich Hun's body he thrust his lance so keen :
Many a dame and maiden bewailing that were seen.

Swiftly then did hasten Hagen and his train ;
With his sixty Degen to ride in he began,
Where the Fiedelspieler in the lists did stay.
Etzel and Chriemhilda all that passed did see.

Not long did the Princes leave the bold Fidelere
By his foes surrounded without protection there.
Of their knights a thousand rode in cleverly ;
They did thus what they listed with high-bred courtesy.

When now had spread the tidings that the rich Hun was slain,
Wailing and lamentation amongst his friends began.
Inquired then the servants by whom it had been done ;
One answered : "It was Volker, the bold Fiedelmann."

For their shields and weapons called quickly then to hand,
The friends of the Margrave of the Hunnish land :
To death they would have stricken the bold Fidelere.
The Host down from his window began to hasten there.

Then rose from out the Hunmen great uproar over all
The Princes with their people dismounted by the Hall ;
Forced backwards by the horses were those of Gunther's Court.
Then came the Monarch Etzel ; to calm the strife he sought.

He snatched a trenchant weapon quickly from the hand
Of the rich Hun's cousin, who did near him stand,
And drove them fiercely backwards, so much his wrath prevailed :
" How had I with these heroes in kingly usuage failed,

" If here to death were stricken the gallant Fiedelmann,"
Spake the Monarch Etzel ; " so had much wrong been done.
When he the Hun Knight pierced I marked his riding well,
That without blame attaching thro' his stumbling it befell.

" To these my guests ye shall now courteous attention pay."
Thus did he rule and guide them. The steeds were led away
To the allotted quarters ; of squires they had enow,
Who to the stalwart Degen did zealous service show.

With his friends King Etzel went to the Hall within ;
Beneath his glance no longer was any anger seen.
The tables were set ready, they brought them water there ;
Yet had the Rhenish Degen plenty of foemen near.

Sore displeased was Etzel, yet followed many a band
The Princes, all with weapons ready to their hand,
Wrathful at the strangers as they to table went,
To avenge their friend determined when fit occasion lent.

" That you thus armed to table rather than unarmed go,"
Said the Monarch Etzel, " does all too rudely show ;
But to these guests whoever the smallest wrong shall dare,
His life it soon shall cost him ; that shall ye Hunmen hear."

Before they went to table, which with delay was fraught,—
For that the Lady Chriemhild her grief too keenly fought ;—
She said : " My Lord of Berne, to-day I fain must crave
From you both help and counsel ; a troubled heart I have."

Answer gave her Hildebrand, a noble-hearted Lord :

"Who strikes the Nibelungen I lend him not my sword,
No, not for untold treasure ; it shall go with him hard :
They are as yet unvanquished, these knights so well prepared."

"I speak now but of Hagen who has me such wrong done ;
He did Siegfried murder, my own dear loved man.
Whoe'er would part him from them should have gold enow ;
Did any other suffer 'twould bring me heartfelt woe."

To whom replied Sir Hildebrand : "How could that well be,
That one could slay him only ! you yourself should see,
If one o'ercame the Degen there would still be need,
That poor as well as wealthy should be numbered with the dead."

With courtesy spake also Sir Dietrich in reply :

"Forbear, most noble Lady, me with such speech to try ;
Those your friends have never done such wrong to me,
That I such stalwart Degen would as foemen see.

"The suit does you small honour, most noble Prince's wife,
That you would thus in secret betray your own friend's life.
In good faith came they to you hither to this land :
Unrevenged will Siegfried remain by Dietrich's hand."

When she naught dialoyal in the Berner found,
To the Degen Blödel she turned her quickly round,
And promised a wide province, 'twas Nudung's formerly :
Dankwart slew him later, he missed the gift thereby.

She said : "Tis thou shalt help me, brother Blödelein.
There are in this palace great enemies of mine,
Who did murder Siegfried, my loved husband dear :
To him who would avenge me I would aye be bounden here."

Answer gave her Blödel : " Lady, you must know,
For these your foes I dare not let my hatred show,
Since my brother Etzel does them so fondly see ;
If any wrong I worked them the King were wroth with me."

" Not so, dear Sir Blödel, my love thou aye shalt hold,
And for reward I'll give thee my silver and my gold,
And a lovely lady, Nudung's wife was she ;
So mayst thou for ever embrace her fair bodye.

" The land and all the castles will I to thee give,
So mayst thou, noble Ritter, in joy and comfort live ;
If you thus win the province which Nudung once did own,
What I to thee promise shall in all truth be done."

When now the Degen Blödel of this reward was 'ware,
And pondered with pleased longing on the lady fair,
He thought to win by battle this so beauteous wife.
Thereby the Knight did forfeit soon both limb and life.

Then spake he to the Lady : " Go to the Hall within.
E'er any can perceive it a tumult I'll begin ;
Atone for it shall Hagen that he you thus did wound :
This subject of King Gunther I will bring you bound."

" Now arm yourselves," spake Blödel, " all ye in my pay,
Let us to these foemen in their quarters take our way.
This service will not spare us our King Etzel's wife,
So must all we heroes venture limb and life."

When the Degen Blödel now had left the Queen
That he might raise the conflict, to table went she in
With the Monarch Etzel, and all his retinue :
Thus a wicked plotting about the guests she drew.

How they went to table that must you now hear :
Before her wealthy monarchs were seen the crown to
Many haughty Princes, and many Degen keen,
With all due obeisance marched before the Queen.

To his guests showed Etzel their places over all,
The very best and highest sate next him in the Hall.
For Christians and heathens he due provision made ;
Their fill to both was given, as the wise King bade.

In their quarters feasted Gunther's retinue.
Servers were allotted to give them service due ;
Those for their refreshment ample provision made :
Their joy and entertainment were soon by grief outweighed.

Since way she found not other to begin the strife
(In Chriemhild's heart lay buried the old wrong of her life),
She bade them bring to table here and Etzel's son :
What wife could in her vengeance more fiendish deed have done !

Four of Etzel's people entered quickly there,
And brought with them Ortlieb, the Prince so young and fair,
To the royal table where Hagen also sate :
The child soon must perish through his murderous hate.

When the wealthy Monarch saw his son appear,
To his Lady's brothers kindly spake he there :
" See ye now, my dear friends, this is my only child,
And your sister's also ; him with your love pray shield.

" If he his race does equal, a brave man he'll be,
Rich, and of noble temper, strong and fair to see.
If I do live, I'll give him twelve wealthy monarchs' land ;
So may you yet good service have from Ortlieb's hand.

"Therefore will I now beg you, dear friends of mine,
When you again homewards ride back to the Rhine,
That you will with you carry your fair sister's child,
And to the lad be ever of gracious mood and mild.

"Bring him up in all honour till he a man is grown ;
If in your country any should you a wrong have done,
He'll help you to avenge it, comes he to man's estate."
This speech heard Chriemhilda, wife of the King so great.

"In him may all these Degen put their trust by and by,
When he is grown to manhood," Hagen did reply :
"Yet the young King, methinks, does somewhat weakly show :
Seldom will any see me to Court to Ortlieb go."

The Monarch looked at Hagen ; his saying irked him sore,
Though he nothing answered the brave warrior,
Yet in his soul it pained him, and troubled much his mood.
Little mind had Hagen for any pleasure good.

Like the King grieved also was his princely train,
At that which of Prince Ortlieb Hagen had spoken plain.
That they must endure it pleased them, in sooth, not well ;
As yet they knew but little of what so soon befell.

Many who had heard him, and felt their anger rise,
Would have attacked him gladly, as would the King likewise,
Had honour not forbade him ; thus grief came on apace.
More cruel yet was Hagen,—he slew the lad before his face.

THIRTY-SECOND ADVENTURE.

Now Blödel was slain.

By this time Blödel's Recken stood there ready all ;
In a thousand hauberks they marched down to the Hall,
Where Dankwart with the servants at the table sate :
Then stirred amongst the heroes the most bitter hate.

When the Degen Blödel drew the table near,
Dankwart the Marahal gave him greeting fair :
" Welcome here to table, noble Blödelein ;
Strange to me is your coming, say what does it mean ! "

" Call me not then welcome," Blödel did reply,
" For from this my coming your end shall quickly be ;
For Hagen's sake, thy brother, who did Siegfried slay,
For that shall you and others to the Huns now pay."

" Not yet, Degen Blödel," Dankwart did retort,
" So might we soon be ruing this journey to your Court.
I was but young when Siegfried lost his body and life ;
What would with me I know not King Etzel and his wife."

" Of the crime I know not to let you further hear,
'Twas done by your comrades, Hagen and Gunther.
Defend you now, Sir Dankwart, you may no longer live ;
By your death you must now a pledge to Christhild give."

"Will you not give over," Dankwart then did say,
 "So of my prayers repent I, had I them spared this day !"
 Up from the table sprang the Knight so keen and yare,
 And drew forth a weapon of strength and temper rare.

Therewith smote he Blödel with such grim sword-play,
 He struck his head from off him, before their feet it lay :
 "Be that a wedding present," said Dankwart again,
 "To Nudung's fair widow, whom thou to love wast fain.

"Let some other Degen marry her the morn ;
 Would he his hire be earning I'll serve him the same turn."
 A true-hearted Hunman had brought to him the tale,
 How the Lady Chriemhild her great wrong did bewail.

When now Blödel's Recken saw their Lord lie there,
 From their guests such treatment they would no longer bear ;
 With uplifted weapons pressed them on every side,
 With grimmest mood, the people—much woe did that betide.

Loudly then did Dankwart to his comrades cry :
 "Ye see well, trusty servants, what danger there is nigh,
 Defend ye now, my poor lads, in sooth ye have good need,
 So that without dishonour a brave death be your meed."

Those who had no weapon caught up what nearest lay,
 Seats and heavy benches served them in the fray ;
 The sturdy men of Rhineland such treatment ill did brook :
 With such rude arms was given many a mighty stroke.

How grimly thus the strangers bore them in the fight !
 They drove their armed assailants from the house outright.
 Five hundred men or over were therein struck down dead.
 With the blood the henchmen were all wet and red.

The evil-omened tidings in short time were heard
By King Etzel's Recken (their furious wrath it stirred),
That all slain were lying, Blödel and his train ;
Dankwart, Hagen's brother, had done it with his men.

Before King Etzel heard it stood a Hunnish corps
Already armed in anger, two thousand strong or more ;
They made for the Burgundians, as could well have been,
They left no longer living one of Dankwart's men.

Before the house they gathered an armed and mighty host ;
The homeless Burgundians stood bravely to their post.
What availed strength and courage? they were all done to death.
From this, a short time after, arose a fearful scathe.

Of strange and horrid slaughter you may now hear tell,—
Nine thousand servants in deadly struggle fell,
And twelve Ritter also who were in Dankwart's train ;
One saw him all alone amidst his foes remain.

Hushed now was the fighting, silenced the uproar.
Dankwart, the brave hero, glanced his shoulder o'er :
" Woe's me!" he cried, " for comrades whom I saw falling near!
Now must I stand alone amongst my foemen here."

Fiercely struck the sword-blows at the lone one's life ;
For this must soon be wailing many a hero's wife.
His shield he now held higher, he let the fastenings go.
O'er many a suit of armour did the blood now flow.

" Woe's me for this slaughter !" cried Sir Dankwart there.
" Ye Hunnish knights give way now and let me feel the air ;
On me, poor weary Degen, let the fresh wind play."
'Mid many a blow right nobly thro' the door he pushed his way.

As the weary warrior from the portal flew
How fell upon his helmet many a sword anew !
Those who had not felt yet the power of his hand
Sprang quickly to encounter the Knight of Burgundland.

" Would to God," cried Dankwart, " I had an Envoy now,
Through whom my brother Hagen might the tidings know,
How amongst these Recken in such need am I.
In sooth he soon would help me, or else would with me die."

To whom the Huns retorted : " Be thine own Envoy then,
When we to thy brother carry thy body slain ;
Then to Gunther's vassal will his first grief be known .
He has to our King Etzel grievous mischief done."

He said : " Cease now this bluster and give way again,
Or I will make your armour red with many a stain ;
I myself will carry the tidings to the Court,
That to my Lords the burden of this great grief be brought."

So fearful was his onset that those in Etzel's pay
Dared not with their weapons try to bar his way ;
So many spears they showered into his buckler there,
Its very weight constrained him it from his hand to clear.

They thought now to o'ercome him as his shield was gone ;
Hei ! how upon their helmets fiercely struck Aldrian's son !
By this he soon did vanquish many a stalwart man—
Praise the very highest Dankwart thus did gain.

On either side his foemen sprang upon him there ;
In the strife came many to the Knight too near.
Through his foes he struggled like some wild boar free
Beset by dogs in forest ; could any braver be ?

His path was wetted ever by the stains of blood ;
Did ever yet a Recken with such courage good
Force his way thro' foemen like this hero keen ?
Then rushed Hagen's brother to the Court within.

The carvers and the servers heard the clash of swords ;
From many hands the goblets fell upon the boards,
And the dishes also which they to Court did bear ;
Before the steps full many stout foemen did appear.

"How now, then, all ye servers," said the weary Knight,
"Let not the guests yonder for your attendance wait,
To the tables shall ye these good dishes bear,
And let my noble masters the news from my lips hear."

Did any pluck up courage upon the Knight to spring,
So mightily his weapon around him he did swing,
That for sheer fright the others gave him passage free :
Such wonders were accomplished by his bravery.

THIRTY-THIRD ADVENTURE.

The Burgundians fight with the Duns.

WHEN now the brave Sir Dankwart entered the palace-gate,
And of Etzel's servants free passage did entreat,
All with blood be-clouded was the armour that he wore ;
A sharp and naked weapon in his hand he bore.

Now at the hour precisely when Dankwart entrance found,
In the Hall so spacious they carried Ortlieb round
From one board to another, to the noble chiefs in state :
Through this evil errand the child met with his fate.

Loudly called out Dankwart to a Degen there :
" All too long in quiet, brother Hagen, you sit here :
To you and God in heaven I bewail our need ;
Our knights and all our servants are in their quarters dead."

To whom the other quickly : " Who has done this, then ?"
" That has the Degen Blödel with his armed men.
He has paid for it, also, that will I tell to you ;
With these hands his head from off him I did hew."

" Harm therein is little," Hagen did reply,
" When one such an ending of a knight can say
That he by some Recke has to death been done ;
On that account fair ladies shall him the less bemoan.

"But tell me, brother Dankwart, how came you so red ?
Truly I fear you suffer from some wound great need ;
Who is it in this country has done this to you ?
Let the foul fiend help him, or near his life 'twill go."

"I am unhurt," said Dankwart, "my dress is wet with blood,
Which from the wounds has spurted of other Degen good,
Whereof, in sooth, so many I this day did fell,
If I upon my oath were the number I could not tell."

Said Hagen : "Brother Dankwart, guard the door shall you,
And of these Huns be careful that not a man gets through :
I'll deal with these Recken as compels our need.
Without all cause our servants through these men lie dead."

"The chamberlain shall I be !" said the Degen keen ;
"By such a wealthy monarch 'twere a good post, I ween :
Guard will I this portal while life is left to me."
To Chriemhilda's Recken could naught more harmful be.

"Now would I fain be hearing," Hagen did reply,
"What these Hunnish Degen to each other say :
They would well be rid of him who keeps this port,
And who these courtly tidings to the Burgundians brought."

"It is already long since I did of Chriemhild hear
That she without vengeance her heart's grief would not bear ;
Let us drink then Love's potion, and pledge it with Etzel's wine,
The young Prince of the Hunland, with him we will begin."

Then struck the Degen Hagen the child Ortlieb a blow,
So that the blood all downward o'er his hand did flow,
And on the Queen's lap even fell the head of him :
Then 'gan amongst the Degen a slaughter fierce and grim.

He struck next the courtmaster, who had the child in ward,
A slashing blow and sudden with his trenchant sword,
So that beneath the table his head all severed lay :
A poor reward for service the master earned that day.

Now by Etzel's table he saw a Fiedelmann ;
Hagen in his anger quickly to him ran.
With a fierce sweep downwards he sheared off his right hand :
"Take that for thy message to the Burgundian land."

"Woe's me for my lost hand !" Werbelein did cry.
"Hagen, Knight Von Troneg, injured you how have I ?
In good faith and honour I sought your master's land :
The strings how can I master now you have lopped my hand ?"

Little cared Sir Hagen though he ne'er played again.
The cruel lust for murder shone now from his eon
Against Etzel's Recken, of whom he many slew :
Thus to the death he hurried of good knights not a few.

Volker, the swift Degen, from the table sprang,
His sword-bow so mighty in his mailed hand rang.
He played with mighty power, King Gunther's Fiedelmann :
Hei ! what eager foemen in Hunland he did gain.

Sprang also from the table the three Princes dread.
They hoped to calm the tumult ere to worse it led ;
Yet with all their power 'gainst it they strove in vain,
Since Volker now with Hagen so fiercely raged again.

Now saw the Rhenish Landlord that he could not part the fight,
Then did the wary Gunther with many a deep wound smite,
Thro' their glittering harness, his cruel enemy :
That he was a swift Degen he let them clearly see.

Struck next into the conflict the stout Prince Gernot ;
Of the Huns full many to their death he wrought,
By the keen-edged weapon, which Rüdiger to him gave :
Therewith of Etzel's Recken he brought many to the grave.

Of Ute's sons the youngest sprang also to the fray,
Swiftly his keen falchion thro' the helms made its way
Of King Etzel's Recken from the Hunnish land :
Many a blow full weighty gave stout Geiselher's hand.

How brave they were soever, the Princes and their train,
Yet before all the others was Sir Volker seen.
Amongst his sturdy foemen he stood a stalwart Knight :
With goodwill slew he many in that bloody fight.

A stout defence made also those in Etzel's pay :
Fiercely raged the combat up and down that day.
Many a sword was flashing through the spacious Hall.
A mighty note of wailing was heard over all.

Those without were striving to join their friends within,—
In the attempt small vantage could they hope to win ;
Those on the inside also to force the door would try :
From neither side would Dankwart let them pass him by.

Then before the portal a dreadful uproar rose,
And with loud crash on helmets resounded furious blows.
Thereby came gallant Dankwart at length into great need ;
His brother fain would help him, as his true love bade.

Then with loud voice Hagen called to the Fidelere :
"See ye yonder, comrade, how my brother dear
Stands amid the Hunmen, beset by furious fight ?
Friend ! rescue now my brother, else shall we lose the Knight."

Answered him Sir Volker : " That will I gladly do."
With a mighty bow-stroke he forced a passage through :
A bright and trusty weapon in his hand did show.
From the Burgundian Recken he had thanks enow.

Then did the bold Knight Volker to Sir Dankwart say :
"Suffered have you truly great distress this day !
Your brother now has begged me to give you help at hand :
If you without will tarry, I will within here stand."

Dankwart, the swift Degen, without the portal stood.
From the steps he drove back those who enter would.
One heard the clash of weapons 'neath his powerful hand ;
So did within also Volker of Burgundland.

Then did the stalwart Volker high o'er the tumult call :
"Rest well assured, friend Hagen, firm closed is the Hall ;
Secured is now as safely good King Etzol's door,
By hands of us two Recken, as with a thousand bolts or more."

When now Von Troneg Hagen the door thus guarded knew,
His shield behind his shoulder the sturdy Degen threw ;
For what had him befallen revenge he now would take.
Of their lives small value his foemen there might make.

When the Lord of Berne saw the wondrous might
With which the doughty Hagen shattered the helms in fight,
The Amelungen Monarch sprang upon a seat :
"This Knight does give us," quoth he, "a very bitter treat."

The Host was deep in sorrow, as he in sooth had need ;
Of his friends how many before his eyes lay dead !
Himself was scarce in safety before his foemen there :
He sate in anxious trouble, what though a King he were ?

Chriemhilda the wealthy called Sir Dietrich to :

"From this place now help me, noble Knight and true,
By all the princely virtues of your Amelungland ;
If Hagen does but reach me dead am I by his hand."

"How then can I help you," Sir Dietrich answered there,
"Most noble King's daughter ! for myself must I care.
So fiercely are they raging these men in Gunther's train,
That in this hour for no one can I assistance gain."

"Not so, brave Sir Dietrich, noble Knight and good,
Let this day now appearing shine forth your virtuous mood ;
Bring me from hence, I pray you, or you will leave me dead.
Help me and King Etzel out of this fearful need."

"I will essay," said Dietrich, "if any help there be ;
Yet in a long life truly did I never see
So bitterly enraged so many Ritter good.
Through sword-cloven helmets I see spurt forth the blood."

Then 'gan to call the Ritter with voice of trumpet sound,
The clarion ring far-reaching filled the Hall around,
So that the spacious Castle shook with the mighty tone.
Far beyond all measure Dietrich's strength was shown.

He called so loud that Gunther did the summons hear ;
Amid the furious uproar to listen he 'gan there.
He said : "The voice of Dietrich in my ears does ring ;
Some friend of his our Degen do in peril bring."

"I see him on a table beckon with his hand,
Stay, then, all ye Degen and friends from Burgundland ;
A truce now with the fighting, and first let us hear,
What mischance this hero from our men has to fear."

When thus the Monarch Gunther high entreaty made,
Through all the furious combat sank down each eager blade.
So great his power was proven, none struck another blow.
What 'twas the Berner wanted that would he quickly know.

He said : " Most noble Dietrich, what has chanced this day
To you from these my Degen, tell me now, I pray.
Ready am I gladly for the same to atone ;
Right sorely would it grieve me if wrong to you were done."

Then spake the Degen Dietrich : " Naught has chanced to me ;
Let me from this palace depart now peacefully,
And with me my companions out of this bitter strife ;
For that will I be bounden to you all my life."

" What need is there for praying ?" Wolfhart did retort,
" Yon doughty Fiedelspieler holds not so fast the port,
But to your strength 'twill open so that we make free way."
" Silence," said Sir Dietrich, " there'll be the devil to pay."

Then spake the Monarch Gunther : " Leave have you right well ;
Take with you from this palace whomsoe'er you will,
Save only those my foemen, they shall here remain :
Through them amongst the Hunmen great wrong we do sustain."

When this had heard the Berner, he circled with one arm
The fair and lovely Chriemhild ; great was her alarm ;
He led forth with the other the Monarch Etzel there.
Many a haughty Degen followed Dietrich near.

Outspake then the Margrave, noble Rüdeger :
" Say now if from this palace may depart one more
Who would gladly serve you, well, then, let me know ;
So shall our true friendship ever firmer grow."

Quickly gave him answer Geiselher of Burgundy :
"Exchange with you naught will we save peace and harmony ;
You have been faithful ever, and those in your pay,
With your friends now fearless from hence depart you may."

As Rüdiger the Degen left King Etzel's Hall,
Five hundred men or over followed him in all.
In true and loving spirit this by the Lords was done,
Whereby the Monarch Gunther great harm soon after won.

Then saw a Hunnish Degen how King Etzel went
By the side of Dietrich, a gladdened glance he sent.
On him the Fiedelspieler turned with such swift play,
That before Etzel's feet his head on the floor lay.

When now the Hunnish Monarch did the courtyard win,
He turned him round and looked on Volker there within :
"Woe's me for this stranger ! This is a cruel scathe,
That all these my Recken thro' them find their death !

"And woe, too, for this feasting !" Etzel did exclaim ;
"Within there fights a warrior, Volker is his name,
Fierce as the savage wild-boar, a Fiedelmann is he ;
My good stars I thank now that of this fiend I'm free.

"His chords are dark and evil, his sweeping strokes are red ;
Of my heroes many through his tones are dead.
I know not what has hither sent us this Fiedelmann,
In sooth, a guest so harmful in my life I ne'er wan."

Down then to their quarters went the knightly pair,
Dietrich of Berne and Margrave Rüdiger.
Aloof from the contest to keep them both were fain,
They bade also their Degen from strife to refrain.

And had they but fore-knowledge, the men of Burgundy,
What to them for mischief these knights would shortly be,
They had not then so lightly from the house have got away,
Till with their stalwart Degen they had 'countered in the fray.

Those whom they willed they thus had allowed to leave the
ground ;

Then from the inner palace arose a fearful sound.

The guests took bitter vengeance for woe and injury ;

Volker the stalwart Degen, hei ! what helms brake he !

Towards the sound then turned him, Gunther the wealthy King :

"Dost hear the tones, friend Hagen, which Volker there does fling

About the Hunnish Degen, when they the door would near ?

Methinks 'tis a red varnish which his bow doth wear."

"Now without measure rue I," Hagen quick replied,

"That I should ever part me from the Degen's side :

I was his trusty comrade, as he was also mine,

And if we win our way hence, so will we yet remain.

"See you now, noble Gunther, how Volker loves you true,

And how your gold and silver such zeal does make his due ?

His mighty sword-bow crashes through the hardest steel,

The gay plumes of the helmets he sends far down the vale.

"Fiedelmann ne'er saw I make such gallant stand,

As this day has Volker 'gainst the Degen of this land ;

His tones you may hear sounding thro' helm and buckler rim :

Good steed and noble raiment may well come to him."

Of the Hun knights as many as were found in that Hall,

Not one of them remained alive out of them all.

Hushed then was the tumult, none left in fight to stay ;

The keen and sturdy Recken their swords aside did lay.

THIRTY-FOURTH ADVENTURE.

How the Dead were thrown from the Hall.

ALL fatigued and weary the Lords then lay them down.
Volker and Hagen stood without alone,
On their broad shields leaning in their haughty mood ;
Spake then in lengthy converse the two heroes good.

Then from the Burgundians spake the young Geiselher :
" Little of rest, dear comrades, you must be taking here ;
You should first these bodies from the house bear away :
They will again attack us, that can I truly say.

" Let them here no longer lie beneath our feet,
Before in stormy onset our foes again we meet.
Of wounds we have full many, little of those I reck ;
For such am I right ready," so the brave Knight spake.

" Well's me for such a leader," Hagen spake outright ;
" That counsel would fit no one but such a gallant Knight,
As in our young master we do this day see ;
Ye Burgundians well may in joyous temper be."

The counsel then they followed, and through the portal drew
The dead and dying bodies, which adown they threw.
From where the steps descended they fell down below ;
Then from thence resounded a cry of grievous woe.

Amongst them were yet many who wounded lightly were,
So that they might have rallied, had they found proper care
Yet from the height down falling these also met their death
Their friends around stood wailing, they suffered cruel scath

Then spake the Fiedelspieler, Volker the Degen bold :
" Now see I here right truly what hast to us been told ;
How these Huns are cowards, and like to women weep,
When o'er their battle-wounded they should a fit charge keep."

His words seemed to a Margrave to be all true and good :
He saw one of his kinsmen lying in his blood ;
Him he would fain have rescued, and in his arms had ta'en,
Then fell he to death piercèd, by the grim Volker slain.

When this the others witnessed a great flight then began,
To escape they all endeavoured from that same Fiedelmann.
A spear from the floor took he that was both stout and keen ;
By one amongst the Hunmen at him it thrown had been.

This sent he thro' the fortress, with power and mastery,
Over their heads. This seeing, Etzel's folk gave way,
At the strong cast frightened, farther from the Hall ;
Before his strength so mighty the people feared all.

There stood before the Palace many thousand men.
Volker and Hagen began to parley then
With the Monarch Etzel, in their haughty mood ;
Which brought soon great sorrow to these Degen keen and good.

" Well had your men," quoth Hagen, " some comfort in their grief,
If they saw their masters fight in storm and strife,
As with my Lords yonder every one doth show :
Their swords hew thro' the helmets that the warm blood doth flow."

Etzel was no coward, he snatched up his shield :
" For your life now be caring," spake to him Chriemhild,
" And offer to these Recken what gold a shield will bear ;
Your death you will be meeting if Hagen comes you near."

The King was so high mettled he would the combat share,
Amongst wealthy Princes such readiness is rare.

By his buckler fastenings to hold him they were fain ;
Began the grim Hagen the more to mock him then.

" In sooth, 'twas a far kinship," Hagen loud did cry,
" Which Etzel and Sir Siegfried together once did tie ;
He was Ohriemhild's lover or e'er she had seen thee :
Wicked Monarch Etzel, what plottest thou 'gainst me ?"

Heard was this saying by the noble Queen,
Therewith was greatly troubled Ohriemhilda in her mien,
That he thus dare shame her before King Etzel's Court :
Anew against the strangers to entreat she did resort.

She said : " Who now will slay me Hagen the Troneger,
And bring me as a present his head in token here ;
For him this shield of Etzel I'll fill with ruddy gold ;
Reward I'll give him also, castles and lands to hold."

" I know not why they tarry," spake Volker the Degen keen ;
" Never surely heroes have so backwards been,
When they have heard offered such high and noble fee.
Ne'er again by Etzel will they beloved be.

" Who here like base dastards eat their sovereign's bread,
And now would foreake him in his greatest need,
Of such do I see many who do backward hold,
And yet appear so daring ; their shame will aye be told."

Etzel, the wealthy Monarch, had trouble and great scathe,
For his friends bewailed he, and his liegemen's death ;
From many a neighbouring country the knights stood round him
there,

King Etzel's grief so weighty they with him did share.

Then thought their noblest Degen : " What Volker says is true."
Yet was there surely no one who this so much did rue
As the Margrave Iring, a Danish Recke good ;
The which a short time after he right plainly showed.

THIRTY-FIFTH ADVENTURE.

How Iring was slain.

THEN cried the Margrave Iring, the brave and noble Dane :

"In pursuit of honour my heart has long been keen,
In storm of battle also renown I oft have gained ;
Bring me now my weapons ; Hagen will I withstand."

"Fain would I dissuade you," Hagen quick did say,
"Since King Etzel's Recken before me must give way :
Though two or three amongst you were this Hall to win,
I would despatch them surely down yon stairs again."

"Thy boasting will not daunt me," Iring loudly cried ;
"Deeds of a like daring have I already tried.
With my single weapon I will meet thee now :
How will that pride help thee, which thy speech doth show ?"

Soon stood in his armour Iring, the Danish Knight,
And from Thüringen, Irnfried, a youthful warrior bright,
And Hawart, the stalwart, with a thousand men,
Who would assist Iring in the fight to win.

Then saw the Fiedelspieler how a mighty host
Came with the Degen Iring armed towards his post ;
Firmly fixed they carried their shining helmets good.
At this the sturdy Volker waxed wrathful in his mood :

"See you now, friend Hagen, how Iring thither goes,
Who but now in combat with you alone would close ?
Such lies become not heroes, in sooth, I blame him sore ;
There go with him all armed a thousand men or more !"

"Speak not to me of falsehood," said the noble Dane,
"What I have proclaimed that I will maintain.
For no coward's purpose shall my word broken be ;
Hagen alone I'll counter, how dread soe'er he be."

All his friends and liegemen Iring entreated low,
That against the Recke he alone might go.
Sore unwilling were they, too well to them was known
What fell prowess Hagen of Burgundy had shown.

So long he did beseech them that they at length gave way.
When now his companions him so resolved did see,
And that he strove for honour, they let him go forth then
Between the two brave Recken a grim fight now was seen.

Iring of Denmark poised on high his spear,
Covered with his buckler he to the Knight drew near,
With fierce and stormy onset at Hagen swift he ran :
Then from all the Degen a mighty shout began.

With force terrific hurled they their spears thro' the air,
Piercing the stout bucklers, e'en to their armour fair,
So that the sturdy spear-stocks high in splinters flew ;
With ready grip the Degen their swords then grimly drew.

Full of strength and courage was bold Hagen found :
Iring struck so fiercely the strife did far resound ;
With the blows loud echoed towers and palace wide.
In his will the Degen could not yet succeed.

Still was the grim Troneger unwounded by the Dane ;
Then on the Fiedelspieler Iring rushed amain.
He thought he might subdue him by his mighty blows ;
Yet knew the wary Degen well how to parry those.

Then struck the Fiedelspieler o'er the buckler rim,
Till the stout clasps quivered with the strokes so grim.
Iring left him standing ; for the worse changed had he :
Then ran he next at Gunther, the King of Burgundy.

Yet found he the Rhine Monarch stout enough in fight,
Though at each other fiercely struck each stalwart Knight,
Still from their wounds escaped not the warm flowing blood :
They owed that to their armour, which was too firm and good.

Iring now left Gunther and at Gernot ran ;
From his coat of armour the sparks to flash began.
Full nearly then had Gernot, the Prince of Burgundy,
Smitten the bold Iring down upon his knee.

He sprang then from the Princes—quick he was enow ;
Four of the Burgundians the dexterous hero slew,
Of the noble army from Worms upon the Rhine ;
Seeing this could Geiselher not more enraged have been.

“God, he knows, Sir Iring,” spake young Geiselher,
You shall make good atonement for these lying here
At this hour before you.” He ran at Iring then,
And struck the Danish hero that he to fall began.

Under his hand he slipped down upon the bloody floor,
So that all bethought them ne'er would the Degen more
In the storm of battle wield his sword again :
Yet lay before Geiselher still unhurt the Dane.

From the crash of helmet, and the clash of steel,
The Danish Knight his senses so stunned and sick did feel,
That if he still were living scarce to him was known :
This with his mighty prowess had stout Geiselher done.

Yet when the sword swift flashing no more confused his brain,
And from the shock of combat he 'gan breathe again,
He thought : " I still am living, and never a wound do show ;
Now first do I the strength of this bold Geiselher know ! "

He heard around his foemen on both sides crowding near ;
Had they guessed him living they had made him sure :
Geiselher he also was 'ware of, standing by.
He pondered how he living out of their midst could fly.

How quickly then the Degen sprang up from the blood !
To his wondrous swiftness, in sooth, great thanks he owed.
He ran then from the Palace, where Hagen yet did stand,
And many a swift stroke dealt him with his powerful hand.

Bethought him then the Troneger : " Thou must a dead man be,
Unless the devil keep thee, if so, the worse for thee."
Yet Iring wounded Hagen through his helmet's guard :
This did the Knight with Waske ; that was a wondrous sword.

When now the grim Troneger of his wound was 'ware,
In his hand his weapon fiercely he brandished there.
Before him Hawart's liegeman to give way was fain ;
Down the steps to follow began Hagen then.

O'er his head his buckler the gallant Iring swung ;
And had the downward passage been three times as long,
Never once did Hagen let him strike a blow :
How many ruddy flashes on his helm did show !

Back then to his comrades came Iring whole and sound.
Quickly did the tidings come to Chriemhild round,
How in strife with Hagen he did himself maintain ;
The noble King's daughter 'gan much to thank him then :

"Now God be praised, Sir Iring, trusty Knight and good,
Great comfort thou hast brought me, both in heart and mood ;
Now see I Hagen's armour all with blood bestained !"
For joy herself did Chriemhild take the shield from his hand.

"You may well warmly thank him," Hagen made reply ;
"Should it please the Degen one more bout to try,
And to come back hither, he were a plucky man :
The wound will help you little which I from him wan.

"That thus red my armour from my wounds you see,
Will mean death to many thro' wrath aroused in me.
Now am I first right angry with you and with your train.
From the Degen Iring small harm did I gain."

There where the wind did fan him stood the Danish Knight ;
He cooled him in his armour, his helm unloosed quite.
Praised him all the people for his pluck and go,
Whereat the Margrave bore him high enough, I trow.

Then again spake Iring : "Go, friends, and bring to me
Some new armour hither ; I will once more see
Whether I can vanquish this over-haughty Knight."
His shield was sorely battered—they brought one new and bright.

Clad in still better armour did Iring soon appear ;
He caught up in his anger a strong and massive spear,
Wherewith he would the Troneger again assail in fight.
Thereat chafed grimly Hagen, that bold and fearless Knight.

To await him there no longer would the Troneger stay.
With taunts and bitter gibings he met him full half way,
Even at the staircase ending, so fierce his angry mood :
Then came the Degen Iring's prowess to little good.

They struck each other fiercely till the air did rain
With sparks all blazing ruddy. He of Hawart's train
Was by Hagen's weapon wounded heavily ;
Thro' helm and buckler passing, ne'er again sound was he .

When the Degen Iring of his wound was 'ware,
With his buckler covered he his helmet there ;
The hurt seemed to him deadly which he from Hagen wan :
Soon got he yet a greater from King Gunther's man.

Before his feet a javelin was by Hagen seen,
This he caught up quickly and hurled it at the Dane,
So that from his helmet the shaft without did stand :
A grim death the Degen had from Hagen's hand.

Forced again was Iring to the Danes to fly.
Ere from his head the helmet they could draw away,
To free him from the javelin, he felt his death was near.
His comrades wept around him, they had good cause to fear.

Then came the King's daughter to see him where he lay,
O'er her stalwart hero to weep fain was she ;
Her tears were softly falling, bitter was her grief.
Then spake before his comrades the Knight so keen in strife :

" Let alone this wailing, great and noble Queen ;
What avails your weeping ? soon this life of mine
Through these wounds all gaping swift will flit away ;
Death wills that no longer I in your service stay."

To the Thuringians turning and to the Danes he spake :
" The gifts the Queen shall offer your hands shall not take,
Nor shall ye strive for winning of her gold so red ;
And should ye fight with Hagen ye will number with the dead."

Blanched was now his colour, with death then strove in vain
Iring, the brave hero ; well might his comrades 'plain.
There was naught could save him, the Knight in Hawart's pay ;
Then by the Danish Recken commenced a mighty fray.

Irnfried and Hawart sprang before the Hall
With a thousand warriors ; from the Degen all
A shout arose terrific, so that the air was rent.
Hei ! what sharp spears and weighty were at the Rhinomen
sent !

Irnfried, the stalwart Degen, flew on Volker so
That not scatheless could he from the onset go.
The noble Fiedelspieler smote the Landgrave then
Thro' his crested helmet ; wrathful was his mien.

Irnfried then gave Volker such a mighty stroke
That of his cuirass many a steely ring was broke.
Mightily their weapons wielded each hero's hand ;
Yet at last fell Hawart by him of Burgundland.

The Danes and Thuringians saw how their master fell ;
Then before the Palace arose a fearful wail ;
Ere by sturdy fighting they to the door did win,
Many a helm and buckler shattered there were seen.

"Give back, give back," cried Volker, "let them in the Hall,
What they think to compass shall not yet befall.
But a few hours and they all shall perish here ;
The prize that Chriemhild offers they in death shall share."

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When they now, overdaring, pressed into the Hall,
Many a stalwart hero on the ground did fall,
Where he fain must perish 'neath the sturdy blows.
Geiselher and Gernot 'countered well their foes.

A thousand and four were they who came that Hall within ;
Then heard one far resounding of swords a mighty din.
Soon were the Danish Ræcken all numbered with the dead :
Of the Burgundians truly great wonders might be said.

Then reigned around a stillness, the uproar died away ;
Thro' each gaping crevice the warm blood found its way,
E'en to the stone basement, from the Degen slain :
That with their mighty sword-strokes did the knights from the
Rhine.

Sate them down a-resting the men from Burgundland,
They laid aside their weapons and their shields from hand,
Yet stood before the portal the bold Fidelere,
Waiting if yet any for strife would enter there.

Etzel's grief was bitter, and the Queen's also ;
Court ladies and maidens no rest from tears did know.
Death himself it seemed had against them sworn :
Thro' their guests yet many Ræcken of life were shorn.

THIRTY-SIXTH ADVENTURE.

The Queen orders the Ball to be burnt.

"Now lace ye up your helmets," Hagen the Degen spake,
"I and my good comrade the night-watch will take ;
Once again will assail us those in Etzel's pay,
I warn ye then, my Masters, as quickly as I may."

Their helmets then on fastened many a Ritter good ;
They ate down 'mid the wounded, and those who in their blood
Lay there to death stricken, by their swords so keen :
Now were the noble strangers with bitter hatred seen.

Etzel and Chriemhilda a resolve did take,
Ere yet the night drew onward fresh assault to make
With their Hunnish warriors ; before them yet did show
Still some twenty thousand ; these to the strife should go.

Then broke upon the strangers a storm terrific there.
Dankwart, Hagen's brother, the swift warrior,
Sprang before his Masters to the foemen at the gate :
'Twas thought that he had fallen, yet back he safe did get.

The furious contest lasted until the night came down ;
Held them then the strangers like heroes of renown,
Against King Etzel's Recken the livelong summer day :
Hei ! how there before them many a good knight lay !

Until the sun was setting the dreadful slaughter grew :
Thus had Chriemhild's vengeance brought her bitter rue,
On her friends the nearest, and many other men,
Through which the Monarch Etzel ne'er tasted joy again.

Such a murderous contest little had she foreseen ;
She thought but to herself, when she the strife began,
That alone the Troneger thus his end should know ;
The wicked fiend contrived it that all should happen so.

The day had now departed, they were in grievous need,
They pondered how 'twere better were they quickly dead,
Than so long to suffer such unheard-of woe :
The brave and haughty Recken sought peace with their foe.

They prayed then that King Etzel would come to them there.
The heroes red with blood, black and begrimed with war,
Came forth from the portal, in the three Kings' train ;
They knew not in their trouble to whom they should complain.

Both Sovereigns came to meet them, Etzel and Chriemhild too ;
They owned the land and castles, therefore their army grew.
Quoth Etzel to the strangers : " Speak, what would ye with me ?
Are ye for peace seeking ? That can hardly be.

" After such dire mischief, as ye to me have done,
Ye shall ne'er enjoy it while my life does run ;
My child ye have slaughtered, and many a friend beside ;
Peace and atonement, therefore, shall be to you denied."

For answer gave him Gunther : " Compelled us our sore
By your servants' doing lay all my followers dead,
Slain in their very quarters ; was such treatment fair ?
In good faith came I to you, and thought you held me dear."

Then spake from out the Rhinemen, Geiselher the young :
" Ye heroes of King Etzel, whom now we stand among,
What charge ye me with, Recken ? what had I done to you,
When hither to your country in friendly guise I drew !"

They answered : " All the fortress is thro' your ' friendship ' full
Of grief, the country likewise ; we had spared thee well,
Hadst thou never ridden from Worms over the Rhine ;
Thro' you, and thro' your brethren, the land has orphaned been."

Then spake the Degen Gunthor, in hot and angry mood :
" If now this grim slaughter in peace you settle would
With us homeless strangers, it shall for both be well ;
Not yet have we requited what was done by King Etzel."

The Host said to his guests : " Mine and your wrong
Are unlike each other ; this cruel contest long,—
The shame and the disgrace which I from you have won,—
For that shall of you living escape me ne'er a one."

Then answered him Prince Gernot, the good and worthy Knight—
" God now so direct you that you us with love requite ;
Let this have an ending, and let us go free
To our country yonder : much praised you thus will be.

" Whate'er to us shall happen, let it be quickly done ;
Ye have so many warriors who attack us can,
And by constant warfare weary us to death :
How long shall we Recken suffer such cruel scathe ! "

King Etzel's Recken almost such a mood did show,
That they had let the heroes from the Palace go.
Grieved at this was Chriemhild, when of it she was 'ware ;
So must the homeless strangers no peaceful prospect share.

" Not so, ye Recken," cried she, " bend not so your mood,
I will truly counsel the purpose be withstood,
That these murderous fellows you let go from the Hall,
Else will it so happen your friends will perish all.

"If alone were living of Ute's sons the three,
And came my noble brothers where the wind blew free,
So as to cool their armour, ye were all as dead :
Ne'er were such bold Degen before on this earth bred."

Then spake the young Geiselher : "Lovely sister mine,
How could I have foreseen that here from Over-Rhine,
You would have me invited to such cruel scathe ?
How have I deserved here by the Huns my death ?

"True was I to thee ever, ne'er did I do thee wrong ;
I rode in blind persuasion to this Court along
That thou, my dear sister, wert truly fond of me ;
So give us now thy favour : it cannot other be."

"No favour will I give thee, no favour have I won ;
To me Von Troneg Hagen the greatest wrong has done
In my old home, here, also, my dear child he slew ;
They shall all pay for it who hither came with you.

"But if to me, as hostage, Hagen alone you'll give,
I will no more refuse you, gladly I'll let you live,
For I am your sister, from the same mother sprung ;
So will I speak of ransom these noble knights among."

"Forbid it, God in heaven !" the noble Gernot said ;
"Were there of us a thousand we would all as dead
Before your friends be lying ere we a single one
Would give thee up as hostage ; that will ne'er be done."

"We must then all perish," spake young Geiselher,
"So from knightly honour none shall part us here.
Whoe'er to fight us wishes shall find us here arrayed ;
My true faith to my comrade have I yet ne'er betrayed."

Then spake the gallant Dankwart : " Am I the silent one ?
There stands my brother Hagen, not yet here alone.
They who would peace deny us may that denial rue ;
In good sooth shall ye know it, and that I tell ye true."

Then spake the fair King's daughter : " Ye knights and heroes
strong,
Go near the Palace entrance and avenge our wrong,
For that will I repay you as I fairly may ;
This haughty mood of Hagen I will soon take away.

" Out of this house let no one of the Degen all,
Then will I at the corners set fire to the Hall ;
So shall I have vengeance for all my bitter rue."
King Etzel's Recken ready were thereto.

They who without were standing were driven back with blows
And spears into the Hall ; a mighty shout arose.
Yet would they not be parted, the Princes and their men ,
Their true faith to each other did the more obtain.

The Hall with fire to kindle commanded Etzel's Queen.
In torment then the heroes, from the fierce glow, were seen.
The flames, by wind high driven, around the building shone :
Such a scene of horror was ne'er to mortal known.

Within were many crying : " Woo for this cruel scathe !
We might well have rather in battle met our death.
May the good God have pity ; here shall we lose our life !
How grimly seeks for vengeance King Etzel's furious wife."

Then spake one of the Rhinemmen : " Our death we here shall find
From fire and smoke all stifling ; that is a bitter end !
Thro' the fierce heat such torment of thirst does me assail ;
Amid such fearful suffering what can it then avail."

Him answered quickly Hagen, the Knight so stern of mood :
"And if your thirst compel you, then drink here of this blood,
At such a fiery banquet 'twere better still than wine ;
For eating or for drinking naught else can here be seen."

Then went a Ritter quickly where one dead he found ;
By the wound he kneeled him, his helmet he unbound ;
To drink he then betook him of the flowing blood :
Tho' it was so unwonted he found it rich and good.

"Now praised be God, Sir Hagen," spake the weary man,
"That I thro' your counsel such good liquor wan ;
Seldom has any served me with a better wine :
If my life be but spared your debtor I'll be seen."

When now had heard the others that 'twas to him so good,
There came of them many and drank also the blood,
Thereby a fiercer power in all their sinews stayed :
For this full soon must suffer many a wife and maid.

The fire raged with fury o'er those within the Hall ;
They kept off with their bucklers the sparks as they did fall.
The heat and smoke encircling troubled them full sore :
Such cruel suffering chanced to heroes never more.

Then spake Von Troneg Hagen : "Stand ye now by the wall ;
Let not the burning rafters upon your helmets fall,
And tread them ever deeper in the blood with your feet :
'Tis to an evil wedding the Queen did us entreat."

Amid such grim surroundings wore away the night ;
Yet before the portal kept watch Volker the Knight
With his comrade Hagen, leaning upon his shield,
Waiting what greater trouble the coming day might yield.

That the Hall was vaulted gave them great relief,
Thereby there yet remained the better hope of life,
Only that by the windows the fire fiercely played.
Thus did the knights defend them, as pride and honour bade.

Then spake the Fiedelspieler : " Let us now in the Hall,
That the Huns may fancy that our Degen all
Have perished in this furnace which they have kindled here :
They will find yet many when they venture near."

Then spake from the Burgundians the young Prince Geiselher :
" Methinks the day is breaking, I feel the cooler air.
Now God in heaven grant us some sweeter hours to live !
A cruel wedding truly Chriemhild does to us give."

Then of them spake another : " I feel the coming day.
If then for us Degen naught better happen may,
So arm yourselves, 'ye Recken, and guard each man his life ;
In briefest space will near us this King Etzel's wife."

The King by this had fancied the strangers were all dead,
By the crushing ruins and by the fire so dread ;
But of the Degen lived there yet six hundred men,
Such that ne'er a monarch better knights did win.

The leaders of the Rhinemen had indeed well seen
That they still were living, how sharp so'er had been
The sufferings and hardships for masters and for men ;
One saw them sternly pacing the Hall with haughty ken.

'Twas told to Chriemhilda that many were alive.
" How could that well happen that any should survive,"
Said the royal Lady, " after such fiery scathe ?
I will believe rather that they all died the death."

Escaped they yet had gladly, the Princes and their train,
If any grace or pardon they could there obtain ;

This would they, however, ne'er find in Hunnish land :
Their fate they then avenged with right willing hand.

Early on that same morning the loud shout of war
Was their only greeting ; that irked the heroes sore.
Many an ashen spear the Huns at them did send :
With what brave hearts the Recken did themselves defend.

The followers of King Etzel were much roused in mood ;
Chriemhilda's wealth to merit seemed to them but good ;
Ready they were to suffer what their Prince might bid :
For this must many shortly be numbered with the dead.

Of gifts and promised kindness one might wonders hear.
Her gold so red on bucklers she bade before her bear ;
Right willingly she gave it to any who would it take.
Never against foemen was lavished such a stake.

Now did the armed Recken before the door appear.
Then spake the gallant Volker : " You will still find us here ;
For the fight so ready have I ne'er heroes seen,
As they who for our slaughter have ta'en gold from the Queen."

Then cried of them many : " Let us, to the strife, on ;
Whether we stand or fall let it be gaily done :
Death will not spare any who behind would stay."
Pierced with many a spear-thrust were their shields that day.

What need I say further ? twelve hundred knights or more,
In fierce hand-to-hand combat strove upon that floor.
With many a wound the strangers cooled their war-like mood.
No peace was to be hoped for, naught seen to flow but blood

From wounds both deep and mortal freely given there.
To his friends complaining one might each man hear ;
All the warriors perished in the rich Kings' pay :
Enough of grief and trouble had their friends that day.

THIRTY-SEVENTH ADVENTURE.

How Rüdiger was slain.

THE homeless ones by morning mighty deeds had done.
Gotelinda's husband to the Court came down,
And on both sides witnessed grief and trouble sore,
Whereat was strongly pained the faithful Rüdiger.

"O woe's me," cried the Recke, "that I have seen this day,
And this cruel sorrow which none can keep away.
The peace I had kept gladly, but the King willed not so,
So strong and ever stronger urged him on his woe."

To Dietrich a message sent good Rüdiger,
Whether they could do aught with the Monarch there?
To whom the Knight of Berne: "Who can him gainsay?
No further expiation will King Etzel see."

Then by a Hunnish Recke was Rüdiger standing seen,
With eyes all sad and weeping as he before had been.
To Chriemhilda spake he: "See there how he stands,
Whom, before all, King Etzel has dowered with wealth and lands,

"And who for his servants has all this people still.
Why then should Sir Rüdiger have castles at his will,
Given him by the Monarch to do with as he may?
Yet has he struck never a stout blow in this fray.

"Methinks he cares but little what happens to us here,
If only his full comfort does at home appear.

"Twas rumoured he was valiant more so than any man:
Bad proof, to all appearance, in this our need we scan."

With sad heart did Rüdiger, the true and faithful one,
As to this speech he listened, sternly regard the Hun.
He thought : "Thou shalt pay for it that dost me backward call:
Thou hast told the story too near this Palace Hall."

His fist he 'gan to double and on him fiercely ran,
And with a blow so mighty struck the Hunnish man,
That before his feet he felled the talker dead.
At this waxed ever greater the Monarch Etsel's need.

"Down then, cowardly miscreant," spake Sir Rüdiger,
"I had of grief and trouble enough, in sooth, to bear ;
That here I was not fighting, why blamed'st me for that ?
With reason for these strangers I had felt bitter hate,

"And all in my power would I to them have done,
Had I not, as Envoy, brought them to the Hun ;
Still was I their leader in my Master's land :
Therefore I may not fight them with my luckless hand."

Then spake to the Margrave, Etsel, the Monarch, there :
"How then have you helped us, noble Rüdiger ?
Of dead we have so many already in the land
That no more we needed ; wrongly fell your hand."

Replied the noble Ritter : "He stirred me to the soul,
My honour and my riches he did alike befoul,
That I such great presents by your hand did gain ;
Little the lying rascal has by his motion ta'en."

Then came the fair King's daughter, she had also seen
What to the Hun had happened from the hero's spleen :
Thereat she grieved sorely, her eyes with tears were wet.
She said to Sir Rüdiger : "How have we earned yet,

‘That for me and Etzel you do increase our woe ?
You have, noble Margrave, aye given us praise enow,
For us you would venture your honour and your life ;
Oft have I heard the Recken the meed of courage to you give.

“Remember now your promise which you swore to me,
When you did woo for Etzel, fair flower of chivalry,
That you would ever serve me e’en until my death :
Never to me unhappy came more bitter sooth.”

“What I to you promised shall fail not, noble wife,
For you will I venture my honour and my life ;
Yet my soul to forfeit have I never sworn ;
To this feasting brought I these Lords so nobly born.”

She said : “Bethink thee, Rudeger, of thy oath so high,
And of thy steadfast fealty, how thou swear’st to me
Thou wouldst avenge ever my wrongs and heal my rue.”
Then answered her the Margrave : “I am your servant true.”

Etzel the rich with Chriemhild his prayers did unite ;
The pair joined in beseeching the brave and worthy Knight.
Then was the good Margrave in great trouble seen :
The faithful-hearted Recke,—sadly he began :

“Woe to me, God-forsaken ! that I have seen this day !
When all my dearest honour I must throw away,
All nobleness and faith, which God trusted to me here ;
O grief to God in heaven that no death me this will spare !

“Whichever side I leave now, and to the other turn,
My burthen will be only more grievous to be borne ;
And if both forsaking, with shame all would me chide.
Now may my path enlighten He who my life doth guide !”

So long they both besought him, the Monarch and his wife,
That soon full many a Degen fain must lose his life
Beneath the Margrave's prowess ; the hero, too, was slain.
Judge can you well, therefore, of his grief and pain.

He knew that he could only harm and mischief win ;
He would yet so gladly to Etzel and his Queen
In this have made refusal ; the hero feared sore,
If he but slew one of them the world would hate him evermore

Spake then to the Monarch the noble-hearted Thane :
" Sir King, take back, I pray you, all your gifts again,
The land and all the castles, naught shall remain with me ;
Forth thro' the world I'll wander a-foot in penury.

" Empty of all my riches will I leave your land.
My loving wife and daughter take I by the hand,
Ere death I will encounter with no truth left in me ;
Bad service for your red gold that would surely be."

Then spake the Monarch Etzel : " Who then will comfort me ?
My land and all the people will I give to thee,
If thou'lt avenge me, Rüdiger, on these foes of mine,
Thou shalt a mighty Monarch together with me reign."

Then again spake Rüdiger : " How can I do this thing ?
Home to my house invited did I these strangers bring ;
Kindness and entertainment I gave them courteously,
And thereto many a present ; and shall I now them slay ?

" Let the people fancy that I am afraid,—
Never in their service have I aught denied
To these noble Princes and to all their train ;
I rue now the friendship which I from them did gain.

"To Geiselher, the Degen, I gave my daughter dear,
On this wide earth better bestowed she could be ne'er ;
Sought I for birth and honour, for true faith and estate,
Ne'er on a youthful Monarch did such high virtues wait."

Then again spake Chriemhild : " Noble Rudeger,
For our heavy trouble have some pity here
For me and for Etzel ; bethink thee now again
That ne'er yet guests so wicked host did entertain."

Then to the royal Lady did the Margrave say :
" With his life must Rudeger make return this day,
For all that you and Etzel in love have done to me.
Therefore I now must perish,—it can no other be.

" This very day well know I my castles and my land
To you will be returning from the hero's hand ;
So to your grace commend I my wife and child so dear,
And all the homeless people who at Bechlaren are."

" Now God reward thee, Rudeger ! " the Monarch Etzel said ;
He and the Queen also were in sooth right glad ;
" We will all thy people fully cared for see ;
But if I trust my fortune thyself shalt prosperous be."

Thus set he on the venture his body and his soul ;
Etzel's wife, Chriemhilda, would not her grief control.
He spake : " To you I must then keep my plighted oath ;
O woe for my friends yonder, to fight them I am loth."

He turned and left the Monarch troubled deep in mood.
Near at hand then went he where his Recken stood ;
He said : " Haste now and arm ye, all who are in my pay ;
Against the brave Burgundians I must fight, alas ! this day."

His men did quickly gather where their arms were stored ;
Then was many a helmet and many a buckler broad
Borne to the sturdy Degen by the servants there :
Soon did the woeful tidings the haughty strangers hear.

Armed then was Rüdiger with full five hundred men ;
Of brave knights twelve moreover went with him in his train.
The prize they thought to carry in the storm of war ;
No foreboding had they that their death was near.

One saw the noble Margrave with his visor down.
They who followed Rüdiger girt their sharp swords on,
And in their hands they carried their shields so broad and bright ;
With pain not to be uttered saw this Volker the Knight.

Then beheld young Geiselher his father-in-law go
'Neath his frowning helmet. How could he but think so,
As he himself was conscious, that he was true and good ?
Thus was the noble Degen in right joyful mood.

" Now well's me for such friendship ! " Geiselher spake then,
" As on our journey hither we did surely gain.
For my loved one's sake is succour for us near,
By my troth this bridal to me is very dear."

" I know not what consoles you," spake the Fiedelmann ;
" When for such kind purpose were knights so many seen,
With fixed frowning helmets and with swords in hand ?
He will through us now merit his castles and his land."

Ere the Fiedelspieler his word had finished quite,
Before the Hall already stood Rüdiger the Knight ;
His good shield so mighty he laid before his feet ;
His friends he then refused with loving speech to greet.

Then cried the noble Margrave to those in the Hall ;
 " Ye gallant Nibelungen, now defend ye all,
 Ye shall taste my prowess as I will yours the same ;
 Once were we in friendship, now empty is the name."

With terror did these tidings smite the distressed ones sore.
 From this time forth for no one was there joy any more,
 Since they in fight must 'counter whom each did hold so dear ;
 They had from foes already trouble enough to bear.

" Forbid it, God in heaven ! " spake Geiselher the Knight,
 " That you of your friendship should thus act in spite,
 And of the warm kindness which you to us did show ;
 I will now well trust you that you will ne'er do so."

" It can no more be hindered," spake the noble Thane,
 " Fight must I now with you as my oath was ta'en.
 Defend ye then, brave heroes, as each does love his life ;
 To let me leave it wills not this King Etzel's wife."

" Too late you would oppose us," answered King Gunther ;
 " Now may God reward you, noble Rudeger,
 For the truth and kindness which you to us have shown,
 If you to the ending will let it so run on.

" We will ever thank you for what you did us give,
 I and these my comrades, let us but still live :
 Noble gifts you gave us, as you did lead us here,
 To Etzel into Hunland. Bethink thee, Rudeger."

" How gladly would I grant that ! " spake Rudeger the Knight,
 " If I by my gifts now might you in full requite,
 According to my pleasure ; how gladly did I that,
 If so I might not 'counter fair Chriemhilda's hate !"

"Let it alone, brave Rûdeger," princely Gernot said,
"Ne'er was a host yet heard of who his guests has made
Welcome with such kindness, as we from you did share ;
That shall be well repaid you, if our lives you spare."

"Would to God, noble Gernot," Rûdeger answer made,
"That you were back in Rhineland, and that I were dead !
So should I save my honour, since I must you assail ;
Ne'er for a knight 'mid true friends did such hard fate prevail."

"Now God reward you, Rûdeger," Gernot spake anew,
"For your costly presents. Your death I well should rue,
Should it now be compassed by your virtuous mood.
Here bear I your weapon which you gave me, Degen good."

"Never has it failed me in all this cruel need ;
There fell beneath its keen edge many a Ritter dead ;
Strong is it, and high-tempered, a right noble blade :
Such a rich gift surely was ne'er by Recke made."

"And will you not be counselled, and should attack us here,
And should you alay my comrades who stand around me near,
With your weapon will I take your body and life :
So will you rue me, Rûdeger, and eke your noble wife."

"God grant it, princely Gernot, and might it also be,
That, to your willing, all things happen here we see,
And that you shall also rescue your friend's life :
To you will I trust surely my daughter and my wife."

Then spake the child of Ute, Prince of Burgundy :
"Why do you thus, Sir Rûdeger ! They who came with me
Are all to you right loving ; an evil course you take :
You would your lovely daughter too soon a widow make."

"If you now with your Recken do 'counter me in strife,
How much it were unfriendly ! How hard were the belief,
That I you more had trusted than any other man,
When I your fair daughter for a bride did gain."

"Of your troth bethink you, noble Geiselher,
And if God hence send you," so spake Rüdger,
"See that ne'er shall suffer this dear daughter mine ;
By every princely virtue to comfort her incline."

"That will I fairly hold to," spake Geiselher again,
"Yet my true friends yonder, who in that Hall remain,
If thro' you they perish, so must ended be
All this steadfast friendship for your daughter and for thee."

"Now may God us pardon," cried the Degen keen.
Their shields they then uplifted, as would they seek again
The guests in fight to 'counter in Chriemhilda's Hall ;
With a loud voice cried Hagen to the Recken all :

"A little while yet tarry, noble Rüdger.
Let us first further parley," said the Troneger,
"I and these my Masters ; avoid this cruel scathe.
How will it help Etzel that we find here our death ?

"I stand in great trouble, spake Hagen again there.
"The shield which Lady Götclind gave to me to bear,
That has by the Hunmen been broken in my hand :
Yet in good faith I brought it here to Etzel's land.

"If the God in heaven would vouchsafe to me
Such a shield of temper in my grasp to be
As your hands now carry, noble Rüdger,
So need I in battle no corselet to wear."

"Gladly would I serve you with this my trusty shield,
If I dared it offer to you before Chriemhild.
Yet take it to thee, Hagen, and bear it in thy hand :
Hei ! that thou home mightst take it back to Burgundland !"

When now this noble offer of the shield he made,
Grew the eyes of many with warm tears red.
It was his last present : never would again
Gift to knight be offered by Rüdiger of Bechlaren.

How grim soe'er was Hagen, how wrathful his stern mood,
The gift moved him to pity, which the Degen good,
So near his life's ending, had on him bestowed.
Many a noble Ritter began to weep aloud.

"Now God in heaven reward you, noble Rüdiger ;
Never more on this earth will your like appear,
To a homeless Degen such loving gifts to give :
May God so grant it that your virtues ever live.

"Woe's me for this ending," Hagen further spake,
"We had enough truly of trouble and heartache ;
God might well have spared us that we with friends should war."
Then again spake the Margrave : "That irks me wondrous

"For your gift will I reward you, noble Rüdiger :
Whatever may in combat chance to these Recken here,
Never in the contest assail you shall my hand,
Not e'en if you should slaughter all these from Burgundland."

Gratefully inclined him the good Rüdiger.
All around stood weeping that no help was near
Against this cruel trouble ; that was a bitter ache.
The noblest of all heroes found in Rüdiger death.

Then from the lofty portal the Degen Volker said :
 " Since my comrade Hagen peace with you has made,
 I will the same offer make you by this hand.
 Right well you have earned it since we came to this land.

" You shall, noble Margrave, my good Envoy be ;
 These red golden bracelets which Gotelind gave to me,
 That I so might wear them at this High-tide gay :
 May she herself soon see you, that of this you witness may."

" God in mercy grant it," spake Sir Rüdeger,
 " That my lady Gotelind may more such to you spare.
 These tidings tell I gladly to my wife so true,
 If I again do see her ; that you may surely know."

After this solemn promise his arms Sir Rüdeger took,
 His mood began to darken, no more delay could brook ;
 Upon the strangers ran he as a hero may :
 Many a mighty sword-blow the Margrave struck that day.

Kept clear of him the two Knights, Volker and Hagen, far,
 As to him had promised these Recken keen in war ;
 Yet by the door he 'countered so many a valiant man,
 That this blood-feud Rüdeger with great grief began.

Bent on deadly purpose after him did run
 Gernot and Gunthor, heroes they were known.
 Aloof held him Geiselher, forsooth it irked him sore ;
 To live yet he did hope for, so kent from Rüdeger far.

Sprang then on their foemen those in Rüdeger's pay ;
 One saw them with high mettle with their Lord make way.
 Weapons, sharp and trenchant, their strong hands did bear ;
 Was broken many a helmet and many a buckler fair.

Gave back, too, the weary ones many a sturdy stroke
On those from Bechlaren, which so grimly broke
Thro' the mailed armour, and bit e'en to the blood :
In the storm performed they wondrous feats and good.

The deadly conflict raged now fiercely in the Hall ;
Volker and Hagen sprang in amidst them all ;
In peace they left no one save Rüdiger alone ;
Beneath their strokes the warm blood ran from the helmets down.

How fearfully the crashing of swords was heard that day,
So that beneath the fierce strokes jewelled shields gave way ;
Showered were the jewels in the blood like rain.
So grim was the fighting, as ne'er will be again.

The Margrave of Bechlaren made many a pathway through,
As such a knight of mettle in battle's storm could do ;
The broad day did of Rüdiger right clearly proclaim
That he was a Recke keen and without blame.

Near at hand stood the Degen, Gunther and Gernot,
Thro' them did many a hero find death for his lot ;
Geiselher and Dankwart for safety took small heed :
To their last hour were many by these heroes sped.

Ample proof gave Rüdiger that he was strong enow,
Keen and well armed in proof ; hei ! what knights he slew !
This saw a bold Burgundian—mighty his ire grow :
To his death now near the brave Rüdiger drew.

Gernot, the fearless Degen, called to the noble Thane ;
To the Margrave spake he : " You will surely of our men
Leave us no one living, noble Rüdiger :
That find I all too grievous ; no more I will it bear.

"Now will your rich presents of evil omen be,
Since of my friends so many before me you do slay.
Come meet me there in combat, thou brave and noble man ;
Your gift I fain would merit as fairly as I can."

Before now the Margrave could close with him in fight,
With bloody stains was clouded many a harness bright.
Greedy then of honour the Knights together ran ;
From grim wounds to guard him each wary Knight began.

Their swords were so trenchant no guard availed them there.
Then was Gernot smitten by Sir Rüdiger
Thro' his massive helmet that down flowed the blood ;
That repaid him quickly, the Knight so keen and good.

He brandished Rüdiger's present which firm in his grasp lay,
Though he to death was wounded ; the furious stroke made way
Through the hero's helmet, and through his mighty shield,
Thereto must the good Rüdiger his noble life-blood yield.

Ne'er was costly present so evilly repaid.
Gernot and Rüdiger both in death were laid,
Each, in the storm of battle, struck by the other low.
Then grew Hagen furious when this great loss he did know.

Then cried the Knight of Troneg : " Bad work have we here ;
The loss of these two Degen will cost us all so dear,
We shall it ne'er recover, nor see again our land.
In pledge for Rüdiger's Röcken we homeless strangers stand."

No longer now would any of aught quarter hear ;
Struck down were there many who yet unwounded were,
And who had soon recovered ; but such the press around,
However whole they might be, in blood they soon were drowned.

"Woe's me for my brother ! fallen here in death :
How with every hour threatens us some new scathe ;
I must mourn too ever for the good Rûdeger,
This loss of mine is twofold—my grief is hard to bear."

When the young Geiselher saw his brother fall,
Bitter sorrow suffered his comrades in the Hall.
Death had then rich booty amongst Rûdeger's men ;
Never one escapèd of those of Bechlaren.

Gunther and Hagen, and eke Geiselher,
Dankwart and Volker, the good Knight and yare,
Came to the spot together where the dead were found :
How sadly did these heroes stand in tears around !

"Of our best death robs us," spake young Geiselher.
"Now let us cease our weeping and go forth in the air,
That we may cool our armour, we strife-weary men :—
God in heaven wills not that we longer life retain."

Sitting and reclining many around lay ;
They were again at leisure. Those in Rûdeger's pay
Were all slain, and silenced was the shock of war.
Lasted long the stillness, till Etzel fretted sore.

"Woe's me for such service !" spake King Etzel's wife.
"It is not so trusty, or our foeman's life
Had made fit atonement thro' Sir Rûdeger's hand :
He again will bring them to Burgundian land."

"What helps it us, King Etzel, that we with him did share
Whatever he did covet ? he has done badly here :
He who should have avenged us does for friendship sue."
For answer gave her Volker, the Knight so brave and true :

"No wrong has he thus done you, most noble Monarch's wife ;
And if to such great Lady, the lie I dared to give,
So have you foully slandered the good Sir Rüdiger ;
He and his knights have suffered enough for friendship here.

"So willingly fulfilled he what the King him bade,
That he and his companions lie within all dead.
Look round you then, Chriemhilda, for whom you next will send
True to you was Rüdiger, and faithful to the end.

"If you will not believe it, so for yourselves now see."
And thus it then did happen for their misery :
They carried the slain hero down where the King him saw.
Ne'er knew Etzel's Degen such heavy grief before.

When they thus before them saw the Margrave dead,
Never by historian could it be fully said,
How uncontrolled in weeping, men and women too,
Their heart's bitter sorrow on all sides did show.

The Monarch Etzel's sorrow was so loud and strong,
As with a lion's voice the volume rolled along
In grievous lamentation, and of his Queen also :
Thus did for good Rüdiger their tears unmeasured flow.

THIRTY-EIGHTH ADVENTURE.

Dietrich's Recken are slain.

THE all abiding sorrow did in such measure swell,
That tower and palace echoed with the notes of wail.
The tidings soon reached also a knight of Dietrich's train :
Full of the heavy message how quickly then he ran !

To the Prince spake he : " Hear me, Dietrich, my Lord,
In all my life's journey never have I heard
Such grievous sounds of sorrow as did greet my ear ;
I feared that the Monarch to the feast alone drew near.

" Why also do all the people feel such cruel sorrows ?
The King or Lady Chriemhild, one of them must in death
With these warlike strangers in their wrath be joined,
Such weeping without measure amongst brave knights is found."

Then spake the Lord of Berne : " Ye Recken, true and dear,
Be ye not o'erhasty ; what has been done here
By these valiant strangers compelled them direst need ;
The peace I proffered to them, let it not be gainsaid."

Then spake the gallant Wolfhart : " Let me to the Hall,
To inquire the tidings what did there befall ;
I can then inform you, dear Master mine,
If I there can gather what this woe has been."

Then answered the Lord Dietrich : " When one in anger errs,
And then some rash inquiry in ill time prefers,
Such to haughty Recken with trouble will be fraught :
My will is, therefore, Wolfhart, that you go not to the Court

DIETRICH'S RECKEN ARE SLAIN.

Then sent he out Sir Helfrich, the very worthy Thane,
That he might make inquiry amongst King Etzel's train,
Or amid the strangers, what had happened there :
Never did such great sorrow in all around appear.

The messenger asked quickly : " What has here been done ! "
Then answered one amongst them : " From us now is gone
All hope and consolation in this Hunnish land :
Yonder lies Sir Rudeger slain by Burgundian hand.

" Not one has escapèd who went with him within.
To Helfrich no tidings could have more grievous been
Ne'er heard he sadder story than was related there :
With tearful eyes the Envoy to Dietrich did repair.

" What news then do you bring us ? " cried Sir Dietri
" And why are you so tearful, Degen Helfrich ? "
To whom the noble Recke : " Good cause have I to 'plair
Rudeger, the brave Knight, have the Burgundians sl

Then spake the Knight of Berne : " God grant that ne'er could be
That were a cruel vengeance and devilish mockery.
How from them such treatment could Rudeger have earned !
How dear he holds the strangers have I too well learned."

Thereto answered Wolfhart : " If it be thus indeed,
So must it for all of them with their lives be paid.
If we should endure it, we had shame and scorn enow,
Since we such great service to the good Rudeger owe."

The Lord of the Amelungs for more proof then bade.
At a cressment sate he, heart-troubled much and sad :
To the strangers let he the good Knight Hildebrand go,
That from them what had happened he might surely know.

Veteran Recke, Meister Hildebrand,
Shield nor weapon carried in his hand ;

He wished before the strangers quite in peace to appear :
From his sister's child he a reproof must hear.

Then spake to him grim Wolfhart : " Go ye so bare within,
And think not unreveiled a safe retreat to win ?
With shame you will return, then, on your homeward road ;
Go ye hence in armour, so have ye better guard."

Then girt him the old warrior, as Wolfhart did advise.
Before he had perceived it, stood in serried wise
All of Dietrich's Recken with their swords in hand.
Grieved at this was the hero, he would them countermand.

He asked them : " Whither would they ?" " We will with you go,
To see if Troneg Hagen will such boldness show,
With mocking speech to greet you, as he is wont to use.
When he heard that saying leave could he not refuse.

Then did the gallant Volker all in armour see
The Recken of Berne, in Sir Dietrich's pay,
With their swords on girded, and their shields in hand :
He told it to his masters of the Burgundian land.

Then spake the Fiedelspieler : " Drawing near are seen,
In right hostile fashion, those in Dietrich's train,
Under arms and helmets ; to attack us they are bound.
Now shall we poor strangers in evil plight be found."

No more tarrying was there till Hildebrand drew near ;
Before his feet he planted his mighty shield and spear,
And began to question those in Gunther's train :
" O woe, ye noble heroes, why have ye Rüdiger slain ?

" Me did my Master Dietrich to seek you here command,
That he may know, heroes, if now by your hand
Slain was the noble Margrave, as it is rumoured so ?
Never could we recover from such a heavy blow."

Then spake Von Troneg Hagen : " The story is too true,
Grant would I right gladly, if deceived were you,
Rüdeger to your love ; then were he living yet,
For whom both men and women their grief cannot forget."

When they now perceived that Rüdeger was dead,
Bewailed him sore the Recken as their true hearts bade.
Dietrichen's Degen saw one in tears go,
O'er their beards flowing, so deep was their woe.

Then from the Amelungen spake the Knight Wolfwein :
" And if this day I saw slain the dear father mine,
My grief were not more bitter than for the Margrave's life :
O woe ! who then shall comfort his true loving wife ?"

Then with angry spirit spake Wolfhart the Knight :
" Who now will lead the Recken in many a stirring fight,
As the gallant Margrave has so often done ?
Woe's me, noble Rüdeger, that thou from us art gone !"

Helfrich and Wolfbrand, and eke Helmnot too,
With all his friends surrounding, thus his death did rue.
For very grief could Hildebrand no more question there ;
He said : " Do that now, Degen, for which Dietrich sent us here.

" Give to us the body of Rüdeger from this Hall,
Wherein our days so joyful have sunk in sorrow all.
Let us but repay him what he to us has done
With his truth and goodness, and to many another one.

" Here are we also strangers like the Knight Rüdeger.
How long keep you us waiting ! His body let us bear
Hence, that we in death still may the hero praise :
Right fairly had we done so in his living days."

Then spake the Monarch Gunther : " No service is more true,
Than that which friend to friend after death will do.

Him call I faithful-hearted who will that perform :
Praise can you him fairly, his love to you was warm."

"How long shall we stand weeping?" Wolfhart did reply ;
"Methinks our truest comfort in stout sword-strokes would lie.
And since, alas ! no longer, the good Knight we can have,
Let us from hence bear him, and lay him in his grave."

For answer gave him Volker : "None brings him to you there ;
Fetch ye him from this ruin, where the rich warrior
With wounds all deep and deadly in his blood lies low ;
So shall ye good service to brave Rüdiger show."

Then spake the gallant Wolfhart : "God knows, Sir Fiedelmann,
You dare not yet provoke us ; much wrong you have us done.
Could I persuade my master, you would come therefrom in need ;
We must, however, leave it since to fight we are forbid."

Then spake the Fiedelspieler : "He is too fearful found,
Who when aught is forbidden, lets him in all be bound ;
Such will I hold never a true hero's mood."
This saying of his comrade seemed to Hagen good.

"Will you not cease your mocking?" Wolfhart spake again ;
"Your strings I'll so untune that you yet at the Rhine,
If ever you return there, will thereof have to tell.
Your proud and haughty bragging my honour brooks not well."

Then spake the Fiedelspieler : "If these strings of mine
You of their good tones ravish, so shall your helmet's shine
Troubled all and cloudy grow beneath my hand ;
As yet, I may ride also into Burgundian land."

Then would he spring upon him, yet was the course not free,
Hildebrand, his uncle, held him right sturdily :
"I see thou wouldst be raging in foolish anger tost ;
Then had we my Lord's favour truly for ever lost."

"Let loose the lion, Master, he is so grim of mood ;
Yet if he come too near me," spake the Fiedler good,
"Tho' he the whole people with his hands had slain,
I'd smite him that a back word he ne'er shall speak again."

Thereat enraged was fiercely the Berner hero's mood.
His shield caught up Wolfhart, the swift Degen good.
Like a savage lion at his foe he ran ;
His comrades quickly trooping to follow him began.

The spacious Hall's enclosure with mighty spring he gained,
Yet at the steps o'ertook him the Veteran Hildebrand ;
Before himself should no one come into the strife.
To their wishing found they their guests with like mood rife.

To Von Troneg Hagen sprang Meister Hildebrand ;
Both their weapons heard one clashing in the hand.
Very wrathful were they, as was quickly shown :
From the heroes' swords a fiery wind was blown.

Yet were they soon parted in the hostile crush,—
That did the men of Berne with their onward rush.
Then from Hagen turned him the Meister Hildebrand ;
Came then the sturdy Wolfhart where Volker bold did stand.

He struck the Fiedelapieler on his helmet high,
That 'neath the trenchant weapon the jewelled claps did fly.
Repaid him that with power the brave Fiedelmann ;
He smote Wolfhart so fiercely, that to stumble he began.

From their coats of armour the fiery sparks flew far ;
Each did grimmest hatred for the other bear.
Parted them the Degen of Berne, Sir Wolfwein :
Had he not been a hero, that could ne'er have been.

Gunther, the Degen, with sword-practised hand,
Encountered the strong heroes from the Amelung land.

Geiselher, the young Lord, many a helmet good
Made in the storm of battle wet and red with blood.

Dankwart, Hagen's brother, a warrior grim was known :
What he before in battle had with honour done,
To King Etzel's Recken, was all but as wind :
Now first 'gan rage with fury noble Aldrian's kind.¹

Ritachart and Gerbart, Helfrich and Wichart,
In many a field of battle had proved them stout of heart :
Of that they gave good witness to those in Gunther's pay.
Wolfbrand, too, bore him nobly in the thickest fray.

Then like a raging lion fought Veteran Hildebrand.
Many a stalwart Recken must, 'neath Wolfhart's hand,
By swift death o'ertaken, sink down in his blood :
Rudeger's fate avenged thus these knights so brave and good.

Then fought the Duke Siegstab with all his might and main :
Hei ! in the storm of battle, what helms he brake in twain,
In combat with his foemen,---Dietrich's nephew bold !---
He could not in the struggle himself more bravely hold.

Now when the sturdy Volker came at length to know,
How the gallant Siegstab made the blood-streams flow
Thro' the riven armour, sought him the angry Knight :
The other sprang to meet him ; lost then soon was quite

The life of bold Siegstab through the Spielman brave :
Of his prowess Volker such token to him gave,
That beneath his weapon he soon fell down dead.
Avenged him Veteran Hildebrand, as his honour bade.

" O woe for my dear Lord," spake Meister Hildebrand,
" Who lies here all slain by Degen Volker's hand ;
Now shall this Fiedelspieler no more triumph here."
Hildebrand, the valiant, in grim mood did appear.

¹ " Kind," old Saxon for " child."

Then struck he so at Volker that the splinters all
From the banded helmet flew against the wall,
From helm and eke from buckler of the bold Fiedelmann :
Thus did the sturdy Volker reach to his life's span.

As Dietrich's companions their battle path did take,
They struck so that in pieces many a corselet brake,
And the broken weapons in the air did gleam ;
From the helmets loosed they many a ruddy stream.

Then saw Von Troneg Hagen how Volker lay there low, —
Amid all that had happened that was the sharpest blow
That on him yet had fallen, for friendship or for kin :
O woe, how grimly Hagen to avenge him did begin !

" Little shall this advantage the Veteran Hildebrand ;
Here lies my trusty comrade, slain by the hero's hand,
The very best companion that ever I did win."
His shield he held up higher, then rushed he fiercely in.

Helfrich, the stout Knight, gallant Dankwart slew :
Geiselher and Gunther at this much sorrow knew,
When they saw him falling in his cruel scathe ;
Yet had his hands before this well atoned his death.

So many from all countries of people here did group, —
So many warrior Princes, against the little troop,
Yet had there not Christians opposed to them been seen,
Through their virtues might they from all heathens safe have been

In the meanwhile took Wolfhart his course up and down,
Slaying all before him who Gunther's away did own ;
Thrice had he made already the circuit of the Hall :
Beneath his hand was struck down many a Ritter tall.

Then cried the Prince Geiselher sturdy Wolfhart to :
" O woe that I ever such grim foemen knew !

Brave and noble Ritter, thy course hither bend !
Bear it will I no longer, but bring it to an end."

To Geiselher then turned him Wolfhart in the fight.
Griety wounds full many were given by each Knight ;
With such a furious onslaught he attacked the King,
That from head to foot the blood did from him spring.

With sword-strokes swift and deadly the child of Ute fair
Received the Degen Wolfhart, the Knight so brave and yare.
How strong soe'er the warrior, success he could not have,
Such a youthful Monarch had ever grown more brave.

Then smote he stout Sir Wolfhart thro' his armour good,
So that from the deep wound freely streamed the blood ;
To death had he smitten Dietrich's servant true :
A Recke must he well be who such work could do.

When the sturdy Wolfhart himself thus wounded found,
He let fall his buckler ; with both hands swang he round
A weapon strong and mighty ; sharp was it enow :
Thro' helm and coat of armour he struck Geiselher a blow.

Thus had a grim ending fallen on the twain.
Alive was none remaining of all Dietrich's train.
Hildebrand, the Veteran, saw Wolfhart laid low ;
In truth, until his own death, such grief he ne'er did know.

Dead now were all those also out of Gunther's land,
And Prince Dietrich's heroes. Then went Hildebrand
Where lay Wolfhart, fallen, and weltering in his blood :
In his arms he raised him, the Knight so brave and good.

Him from the house to carry he strove with all his might ;
Yet must he leave him lying, he was too heavy quite.
Then from the floor so bloody up looked the dying man ;
He saw well that his uncle to bear him thence was fain.

Then spake the deadly-wounded ; " Dear Uncle, loved so well,
For me, in this hour, your help will naught avail :
Beware you now of Hagen, in sooth, I counsel good :
His heart does bear towards you a grim and hateful mood.

" And if my friends would sorrow over this my death,
To my best and nearest, say this,—my dying breath,—
That for me they weep not, no need is there for that ;
By princely hands here found I an honourable fate.

" I have, too, so requited my death in this Hall,
That many a good knight's lady will find cause for wail.
If any one should ask you, you may truly say,
That by my hand unaided a hundred fell this day."

Then of his friend Volker thought Hagen again,
Whom the Veteran Hildebrand had so fiercely slain ;
To the Degen said he : " My grief you shall requite :
Slain have you, bold Ritter, many here in fight."

Then smote he Meister Hildebrand, so that with the stroke
One heard Balmung whistle, the sword which Hagen took
From the Degen Siegfried, when he the hero slew.
Himself the Veteran guarded ; wary he was now.

Dietrichen's Recke swung a mighty blade
O'er the Knight Von Troneg, which did his steel invade ;
Yet still remained unwounded Gunther's sturdy Thane,
Then thro' his armour Hagen smote him once again.

When now the Veteran Hildebrand of his wound was 'ware,
From the hand of Hagen worse treatment he did fear ;
O'er his back his buckler threw stout Dietrich's man :
Heavily thus wounded the Knight from Hagen ran.

Of all the Rhineland Degen none did now remain,
Save Gunther and Hagen, the noble Recken twain,

Then, with blood bespattered, went Veteran Hildebrand
Saddest news to Dietrich came by him to hand.

Seated in deep sorrow found he the Berner there.
Yet more grievous tidings must the Prince now hear
Hildebrand he saw coming, his armour with blood red ;
For the cause he asked him, as his trouble bade.

" Now tell me, Meister Hildebrand, how you are so wet
With the blood of Roeken, or who has caused you that ?
You have with these strangers foughten in the Hall.
You should in peace have left them as I did urge you all."

Then spake he to his master : " Hagen attacked me there ;
Who in the house did give me these wounds which you see here,
As hither from the contest to turn me I began :
With my life I scarcely from that devil ran."

Then said the Lord of Berne : " Rightly served are you,
Since you did hear me tell you friendship to these to show,
Yet the peace have you broken which to preserve I bade ;
Were't not to be shamed ever I would strike you dead."

" Be not enraged, Lord Dietrich, with me overmuch ;
To me and to my friends the cruel loss is such.
We sought but to carry Rüdeger from the Hall ;
To let us were not willing Gunther's kinsmen all."

" Woe's me for this tidings ! Is Rüdeger then dead ?
That is the sharpest sorrow in all this bitter need.
The noble Gotelinda is of my nearest kin :
Woe for the poor bereft ones who are at Bechlaren !"

Sorrow of heart and trouble wrought in him like death ;
Then 'gan he fall a-weeping, so keen the hero's scathe :
" Woe's me for the true comrade which they in him have slain !"
This Degen of King Etzel to forget were vain.

"Know ye not, Meister Hildebrand, this sad tale to tell,
How was named the Reeke who Rûdeger did fell ?
He said : "That with his prowess did the stout Gernot ;
Yet by Rûdeger's weapon to death he too was brought."

To Hildebrand then spake he : "Say now to my train,
That they quickly arm them, go with them am I fain ;
And my shining armour bid them bring to me ;
I must have some question with these knights of Burgundy."

Then answered Meister Hildebrand : "Who goes at your command ?

All who alive are left you see before you stand ;
That is but myself only, the others they are dead."
The tale filled him with horror, bitter distress and need,

Such that on earth never he did like trouble know.
He said : "Are all my followers thus in death laid low ?
God has me then forgotten, me, poor Dietrich !
I was a mighty monarch, powerful and rich."

Further spake then Dietrich : "How could it happen then
That they all must perish, the noble heroes keen,
Before these men strife-weary, who had borne such scathe ?
My ill-luck was it only, else had spared them death !

"If then my ill-fate willed so, it should like measure give,
So tell me of the strangers ; was one left who did live ?"
Then spake Meister Hildebrand : "God knows, not one there,
Save only Troneg Hagen and the King Gunther."

"O woe, thou dear Wolfhart, and must I thy death mourn ?
So may I soon lament me that ever I was born.
Siegstab and Wolfwein, and my true Wolfbrand ;
Who then now are left me in the Amelung land ?

"Helfrich, the brave Knight, and is he also slain ?
Gerbart and Wichart ; when shall I cease to 'plain ?
My day of joy for ever is, alas, gone by.
Woe's me that for sorrow no one yet may die !"

THIRTY-NINTH ADVENTURE.

Gunther, Hagen, and Gbriembilda slain.

Then for his armour Dietrich sought with his own hand ;
Helped him while he was arming the Veteran Hildebrand.
So deeply was he troubled, the stern powerful man,
That with his cry of sorrow the house to shake began.

Then came to him, however, the true hero's mood.
In his armour grimly soon the Degen stood ;
His shield so strong and mighty took he in his hand ;
Then went they down together, Dietrich and Hildebrand.

Then spake Von Troneg Hagen : " I see drawing near
Dietrich, the Lord of Berne ; he will attack us here,
And will on us avenge him for what we late have done.
Now shall we see clearly who is the stoutest man.

" And should this Lord of Berne, Dietrich, the Knight,
Think himself so mighty and terrible in fight,
And seeks he on us vengeance for what here befell,"
Quoth the sturdy Hagen, " I will withstand him well."

The saying heard Dietrich, and Meister Hildebrand.
He came where the Recken together both did stand,
Outside the house leaning before the portal wide ;
His shield so strong and mighty Dietrich laid aside.

In tones full of sorrow Dietrich then began :
" Gunther, wealthy Monarch, why have ye thus done
To me, who here am homeless ? What did I to you aye ?
Of all my wonted comfort myself bereft I see.

"It was not enough for you, in this cruel scathe,
That the noble Rüdeger you smote thus to the death,
But now of all you rob me, who my sway did own.
Such wrong to you Degen had I never done.

"Of yourselves bethink you, and of your trouble here,
Of your friends slain round you, and all this stress of war,
And say if you true Recken are not grieved in mood ;
O woe, how I mourn ever for Rüdeger the good.

"Such grief surely never on earth did any know ;
Little did you bethink you of mine and of your woe.
All my friends and comrades lie here by you slain ;
For their loss I never can enough complain."

"We are not so guilty," Hagen answer made ;
"There came all your Degen and did the house invade,
With great show of armour and in battle broad ;
The tale they have not told you in truth as it occurred."

"How could I credit other? Told me Hildebrand,
That they had made entreaty, my knights of Amelung's land,
That you should give them Rüdeger, to bear him from the Hall ;
You offered then but scoffing to my Recken all."

Then answered the Rhine Landlord : "They would Rüdeger bear
From the portal said they, of that I would not hear,
In despite of Etzel, not truly of thy train,
Then the Degen Wolfhart to insult us began."

Then spake the Lord of Berne : "It must now then be,—
Noble, Gunther, let me, by all thy virtues pray,
Requite me now this sorrow, that thou hast madest me know,
Atone it, noble Ritter, so shall it un'venged go.

"Give thyself up as hostage, with Hagen, thy man,
So will I protect thee as well as best I can,

That of the Huns shall no one aught harm to thee do :
Thou shalt in this discover that I am kind and true."

"Forbid it, God in heaven," Hagen did reply,
"That to such surrender two Knights should agree,
Who yet in full armour can hold here their own,
And whom it were right easy for their foes to shun."

"You shall make no refusal," Dietrich did say ;
"Gunther and Hagen, so bitterly have ye
Me in my heart troubled, and also in my mood,
Fairly may you grant this, and make atonement good."

"My true faith I give you, and reach you here my hand,
That I will ride with you home into your land :
With honour will I lead you, and stand e'en to the death,
And will leave unremembered all my cruel scathe."

"This request give over," Hagen answer made ;
"Twere little to our honour that of us 'twere said,
That two such stalwart Degen surrendered to your hand :
With you yet is no one, save only Hildebrand."

"God he knows, Sir Hagen," spake Meister Hildebrand then
"The peace which my Lord Dietrich proffers to you twain
Comes in good time that you should gladly take his word ;
Give now a gracious answer to this offer of my Lord."

"I, too, would take peace rather," quick retorted Hagen,
"Ere with shame and cowardice so before a Degen
I ran, Meister Hildebrand, as you here have done ;
I thought before your foemen more stoutly you had shown."

For answer gave him Hildebrand : "Why taunt you me with
Who by the Waagensterne on his buckler ate,
While the Spanish Walther of his friends so many slew ?
In yourself well have you faults enough to rue."

men spake the Degen Dietrich: "Fits it that Knights like you,
Should bandy words together as old women do?
I pray you, Meister Hildebrand, to answer him no more:
I, a stranger Recke, am beset right sore.

"Let us hear, Sir Hagen," spake then Dietrich,
"What ye said together, ye Knights in virtues rich,
As e'en now ye saw me in armour drawing near?
Ye said that you alone would firm withstand me here."

"That will no one gainsay," Hagen in answer spoke,
"Well will I make trial with many a sturdy stroke,
If my hand can shatter the Nibelungen blade;
That you ask us both as hostage has me right angry made."

When now Dietrich noted Hagen's savage mood,
Deftly he seized his buckler the swift Degen good.
How fiercely from the portal to meet him Hagen sprang!
The trusty sword of Niblung on Dietrich loudly rang.

Aware was soon Sir Dietrich how King Gunther's man
Fought with mood the grimmeest; to guard him then began
The sturdy Prince of Berne from such blows of might.
Well knew he Sir Hagen, that most skilful Knight.

He feared, too, the sword Balmung, a weapon strong enow;
Only at times could Dietrich with art strike counter-blow,
Till he in the conflict o'er Hagen did prevail,
And a wound he gave him which was deep and fell.

Then thought the Knight of Berne: "Weak art thou with long
need,

Small honour would it bring me were I to strike thee dead;
So will I but endeavour, if I can thee compel,
To follow me as hostage." Which sadly now befell.

He let fall his buckler,—his strength was great enow,—
Around the Knight of Troneg his mighty arms he throw,

So by him was conquered at length the daring man.
Gunther, the noble Monarch, to lament began.

Dietrich then bound Hagen, and led him where did stand
The noble King's daughter, and gave into her hand
The very bravest Recke that ever weapon bore !
After her bitter trouble how gladly this she saw.

For joy before the Degen inclined her Etzel's wife :
" Now may you aye be blessed, in spirit and in life ;
Thou hast me well requited for all my cruel scathe ;
Thank thee will I ever, while does spare me death."

Then spake the Degen Dietrich : " Let the hero live,
Noble King's daughter ; you may well forgive,
And let his faithful service his wrongs to you atone.
He shall not for this suffer that he bound to you is shown."

Then to the prison-chamber she had Hagen led away,
Where no one could see him, and where locked up he lay.
Gunther, the noble Monarch, 'gan call loud and long :
" Where stays the Lord of Berne ? He has done me wrong."

Then went the Degen Dietrich to meet him on the ground.
Noble Gunther's prowess was stout and knightly found ;
No longer did he tarry, before the Hall he ran :
From their clashing weapons a mighty din began.

Whate'er of praise Sir Dietrich in after years did know,
Gunther in his anger as furiously did glow.
He was 'mid all his trouble heart hostile to the Knight ;
A wonder was it truly Dietrich escaped in fight.

Two such Degen were they of strength and courage four
That with strokes so mighty did hall and tower resound,
As with their weapons hewed they on either helmet good :
Then showed the Monarch Gunther a right kingly mood.

Yet conquered him the Berner as with Hagen it had been.
The blood from the Knight's armour flowing down was seen,
By a mighty sword-stroke ? that had Dietrich done :
Yet Gunther had him quitted, tho' weary, with renown.

Dietrich now the Monarch as before did bind,
As a king should surely himself never find.
He thought if he unfettered Hagen or Gunther left,
Whoever they might 'counter would be of life bereft.

Dietrich, the Berner, took him by the hand,
And all bound thence led him where Chriemhild did stand.
She said : " Welcome, Gunther, Knight of courage rare."
" Now God reward you, Chriemhild, if you mean truly here."

He spake : " Well must I thank you, dear sister mine,
If your kindly greeting does to grace incline ;
Yet, Queen, so well I know you and your angry mood,
I fear to me and Hagen such greeting bodes no good."

Then spake the Knight of Berne : " My most noble Queen,
As hostages were never such worthy Ritter seen,
As to you, great Lady, I this day assign :
Now let these two strangers be held as friends of mine."

She said she did so gladly. Dietrich then withdrew,
With eyes all dim with tears, from the heroes true.
Then a horrid vengeance took King Etzel's wife :
The two noble Degen destroyed she limb and life.

She let them far asunder in the prison lie,
That each other living they ne'er again might see,
Till she the head of Gunther could to Hagen show :
Thus was Chriemhild's vengeance on both grim enow.

Then went the fair King's daughter where Sir Hagen lay,
With what bitter hatred she to the Knight did say :

"If you will now restore me what you have from me ta'en
So may you yet living see Burgundy again."

Then answered the grim Hagen: "Thy prayer will nothing ea
Most noble King's daughter; I an oath have sworn
That I the Hoard will never show while yet does live
One of my dear Masters, none will it then receive."

"To an end I'll bring it," said the furious wife.
Then bade she that her brother should lose body and life;
His head they struck from off him; this by the hair she bore
To the Knight of Troneg: troubled he was full sore.

When the Knight, woe-laden, saw his Master's head,
To the Lady Chriemhild the brave Recke said:
"As thy wish now hast thou this to an ending brought,
And it has happened also as to myself I thought.

"Dead is now, of Burgundy, the noble Monarch true,
Geiselher, the young Prince, and eke Gernot too.
Of the Hoard knows no one, save God and I alone;
To thee, thou devil's wife, shall it ne'er be shown."

She spake: "A bad requital have you made me then,
This sword of Siegfried will I at least retain;
This bore my own true hero when I saw him last,
When my heart so troubled was with grief o'ercast."

She drew it from the scabbard, defence he could not make.
From the Recken thought she now his life to take;
With her hands she swung it, she struck the head from him
This saw the Monarch Etzel, his heart was sad and grim.

"O woe!" cried the Monarch, "how is fallen here,
By a woman's hands, the bravest Knight that e'er
Breasted the storm of battle and his good shield bore!
For all he was my foeman, my heart for him is sore."

Then spake the Veteran Hildebrand : " Small good she shall see,
That she has dared to slay him, let what will chance to me,
Though I myself be even brought to grief and scathe,
Yet will I take vengeance for the brave Troneger's death."

Hildebrand, the Veteran, did at Chriemhild spring,
The King's wife then smote he with a grim sword's swing.
Such service from Sir Hildebrand she with pain did see ;
What did it avail her that she shrieked so fearfully ?

Those who there had slain been all around were laid ;
Hewn was in many pieces the King's daughter dread.
Dietrich and Etzel to weep were full fain ;
O'er many a friend and comrade they did sorely 'plain.

Thus were all the proudest overcome by death ;
Filled were all the people with bitter grief and scathe.
With anguish thus had ended the Monarch's revelry,
As love will to sorrow too oft become a prey.

I can little tell you of what since befell,
Save that knights and ladies with many tears did wail,
Also the trusty squires, over their friends now dead.
Here has the story ending : this is the Nibelung need.

APPEND I I

NOTE, p. 285.

"*Morass.*" Bosworth, in his *Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language*, published 1838, gives, on the authority of Rask, what is undoubtedly the same word, "*morað*," which he translates or describes as "wine boiled to its third part: *careum vinum*." This is without doubt the same word, for the Anglo-Saxon "ð" ("th" as in "thy") replaces the High Dutch "s" or "3," according to a well recognised rule in philology.

I find, however, in a "*Mittel-hochdeutsches Hand-wörterbuch von Dr. Matthias Lexer, Leipzig, 1872*," the following:— "*Moraz = Maulbeerwein aus mittel-lateinisch moratum, moretum.*" This is evidently cognate with the Anglo-Saxon "*morán*," "*morn*," a mulberry. Lexer refers to the *Nibelungen Lied*.

I am inclined to give the preference to this latter meaning.

TRANSLATOR.

