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"SIGURD FOUGHT TILL HE COULD SCARCELY STAND."

SIGURD THE HERO.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I

THE TOWER OF THE NORTH WEST WIND.

On the rugged shore of the Northern Sea, where the summer sun never sets, there stood long ago a grim bleak fortress, called the Tower of the North West Wind. Before it stretched the sea, which thundered ceaselessly at its base, like a wolf that gnaws at the root of some noble oak. On either side of it glittered the blue fiord, dotted with numberless islets, throwing its long arms far inland. Behind it frowned a dense forest of pines as far as eye could reach, in which the wind roared day and night, mingled often with the angry howls of the wolves.

The Tower of the North-West Wind stood there, the solitary work of man in all that wild landscape. Not a sign of life was to be seen besides. Not even a fisherman's hut on the shores of the fiord, or a woodman's shed among the trees. The stranger might easily have taken the rugged pile itself for a part of the black cliff on which it stood. No road seemed to lead up to it, no banner floated from its walls, no trumpet startled the sea-larks that lodged amongst its turrets.

Yet the old castle was not the deserted place it looked, for here dwelt Sigurd, the mightiest hero of all that land, brother to Ulf, the king.

Men hated Ulf as much as they loved his brother, for Sigurd, with all his prowess, was just and generous, and lied to no man.

"If Sigurd were but king," said they one to the other, "our land would be the happiest the sun shines upon." As it is, Ulf makes us wretched. We had rather be his enemies than his friends.

But though they said this one to another, Sigurd listened to none of it, and when they urged him to rebel, he sternly bade them hold their peace. And he went forth and fought the battles of the king, his brother, and they followed him, wishing only the battle cry were "Sigurd" and not "Ulf."