

And their decision asked;  
But discord rent  
The loud assembly.

vi.

Up rose Odin<sup>c</sup>  
The sire of men,  
O'er Sleipner strait  
His saddle threw:  
The road he took  
Of Nifheim dark,  
And met the whelp  
Of murky Hell.

vii.

Gore him distained  
Athwart the breast,  
Wide flash'd his jaw  
Rent to devour:  
Aloud he bark'd,  
Amain he yawned  
And long howl'd round  
The fire of spells.

viii.

On rode Odin  
His thunder-shaken path,  
On to the roof  
Of Hela high:  
What spot, before  
The orient-door,  
He knew full well  
Volva was laid.

ix.

Turned to the north  
The fire of exorcism  
Began to tune  
The song of death:  
The eddying wand  
The mighty spell  
Unlock'd to moans  
The hell-bound voice.

x. Volva.

What wight is he,  
To me unknown,  
That wakes my sense  
To trouble new?  
Snowed o'er with snows  
By showers beat  
All drench'd with dews  
Dead lay I long.

xi. Odin.

Vegtamr<sup>d</sup> is my name  
The son of Valtams, I;

Tell thou of Hell,  
I can of light:  
For whom is spread  
Yon radiant board?  
That couch for whom  
Flooded with gold?

xii. Volva.

For Ballder brews  
Yon mead-crown'd cup,  
Its pearly wave.  
His the incumbent shield;  
The loud lament  
Of Asa's sons.  
Unwilling have I spoke!  
Dismiss me to my rest.

xiii. Odin.

Volva say on,—  
For I shall ask  
Till I know all;  
This one I want to learn:  
Beneath whose arm  
Shall Ballder fall?  
What man shall nip  
His bloom of life?

xiv. Volva.

That towering thought,  
Swells the proud breast  
Of Haudr homicide!  
Fell Haudr nips  
The blooming day  
Of Odin's son!  
Unwilling have I spoke!  
Dismiss me to my rest.

xv. Odin.

Volva say on:  
What man shall glut  
Revenge for Haudr's rage?  
And on the flaming pile  
Lift Ballder's foe?

xvi. Volva.

Far in her western halls<sup>e</sup>  
Rinda to Odin bears  
A son—who shall not greet.  
His second night, or clear  
His hand of blood, or comb  
His locks, e'er on the pile  
He hurls slain Ballder's foe!  
Unwilling have I spoke!  
Dismiss me to my rest.

xvii. Odin.

Volva say on!

<sup>c</sup> If, in the progress of the ode, the motive of Odin's descent, the dream of Ballder had been again hinted at, the abrupt simplicity with which this stanza sets out, might account for Mr. Gray's omitting the five preceding ones. *In medias res audito rem raperet.*

<sup>d</sup> Vegtamr, Valtams, names of toil and war.

<sup>e</sup> Mr. Gray follows the common explanation of this perplexed passage, and makes Haudr or Horber, the brother of Ballder. Saxo, whose information cannot have been much inferior to Snorro's, makes him the son of Hodbrodd, Ballder's rival for Nanna, and the declared enemy of the Asa. *Lib. iii. Hist. Dan. i.*