

shalt thou have from me here. But, under pain of extirpation, swear that neither in my time nor in that of my young son Magnus wilt thou ever claim any share in this government." Gylle swore; and punctually kept his promise during Sigurd's reign. But during Magnus's he conspicuously broke it; and, in result, through many reigns, and during three or four generations afterwards, produced unspeakable contentions, massacres, confusions in the country he had adopted. There are reckoned, from the time of Sigurd's death (A. D. 1130), about a hundred years of civil war: no king allowed to distinguish himself by a solid reign of well-doing, or by any continuing reign at all,—sometimes as many as four kings simultaneously fighting;—and in Norway, from sire to son, nothing but sanguinary anarchy, disaster, and bewilderment; a country sinking steadily as if towards absolute ruin. Of all which frightful misery and discord Irish Gylle, styled afterwards King Harald Gylle, was, by ill destiny and otherwise, the visible origin: an illegitimate Irish Haarfagr who proved to be his own destruction, and that of the Haarfagr kindred altogether!

Sigurd himself seems always to have rather favored Gylle, who was a cheerful, shrewd, patient, witty, and effective fellow; and had at first much quizzing to endure, from the younger kind, on account of his Irish way of speaking Norse, and for other reasons. One evening, for example, while the drink was going round, Gylle mentioned that the Irish had a wonderful talent of swift running, and that there were among them people that could keep up with the swiftest horse. At which, especially from young Magnus, there were peals of laughter; and a declaration from the latter that Gylle and he would have it tried to-morrow morning! Gylle in vain urged that he had not himself professed to be so swift a runner as to keep up with the Prince's horses; but only that there were men in Ireland who could. Magnus was positive, and early next morning Gylle had to be on the ground; and the race, naturally under heavy bet, actually went off. Gylle started parallel to Magnus's stirrup; ran like a very roe, and was clearly ahead at the goal. "Unfair," said Magnus; "thou must have had hold of my stirrup-leather, and helped thyself along; we must try it again." Gylle ran behind the horse this second time; then at the end sprang forward, and again was fairly in ahead. "Thou must have held by the tail," said Magnus; "not by fair running was this possible; we must try a third time!" Gylle started ahead of Magnus and his horse this third time; kept ahead with increasing distance, Magnus galloping his very best; and reached the goal more palpably foremost than ever. So that Magnus had to pay his bet, and other damage and humiliation. And got from his father, who heard of it soon afterwards, scoffing rebuke as a silly fellow, who did not know the worth of men, but only the clothes and rank of them, and well deserved what he had got from Gylle. All the time King Sigurd lived, Gylle seems to have had good recognition and protection from that famous man; and, in-

deed, to have gained favor all round by his quiet social demeanor and the qualities he showed.

EPILOGUE.

Haarfagr's kindred lasted some three centuries in Norway; Sverrir's lasted into its third century there; how long after this, among the neighboring kingships, I did not inquire. For, by regal affinities, consanguinities, and unexpected chances and changes, the three Scandinavian kingdoms fell all peaceably together under Queen Margaret, of the Calmar Union (A. D. 1397); and Norway, incorporated now with Denmark, needed no more kings.

The history of these Haarfagrs has awakened in me many thoughts of despotism and democracy, arbitrary government by one, and self-government (which means no government, or anarchy) by all; of dictatorship with many faults, and universal suffrage with little possibility of any virtue. For the contrast between Olaf Tryggveson and a Universal-suffrage Parliament or an 'Imperial' Copper Captain has, in these nine centuries, grown to be very great. And the eternal Providence that guides all this, and produces alike these entities with their epochs, is not *its* course still through the great deep? Does not it still speak to us, if we have ears? Here, clothed in stormy enough passions and instincts, unconscious of any aim but their own satisfaction, is the blessed beginning of human order, regulation, and real government; there, clothed in a highly different, but again suitable garniture of passions, instincts, and equally unconscious as to real aim, is the accursed-looking ending (temporary ending) of order, regulation, and government;—very dismal to the same onlooker for the time being; not dismal to him otherwise, his hope, too, being steadfast! But here, at any rate, in this poor Norse theatre, one looks with interest on the first transformation, so mysterious and abstruse, of human chaos into something of articulate cosmos; witnesses the wild and strange birth-pangs of human society, and reflects that without something similar (little as men expect such now) no cosmos of human society ever was got into existence, nor can ever again be.

The violences, fightings, crimes—ah yes, these seldom fail, and they are very lamentable. But always, too, among those old populations there was one saving element; the now want of which, especially the unlamented want, transcends all lamentation. Here is one of these strange, piercing, winged-words of Ruskin, which has in it a terrible truth for us in these epochs now come:

"My friends, the follies of modern liberalism, many and great though they be, are practically summed in this denial or neglect of the 'quality and intrinsic value of things. Its rectangular beatitudes and spherical benevolences, —theology of universal indulgence, and jurisprudence which will hang no rogues, mean, one and all of them, in the root, incapacity of discerning, or refusal to discern, worth and unworth in anything, and least of all in man;