

The performance of the scop differed considerably from singing in our sense of the term. The expression so common in early Germanic literature, "singan and secgan," is in this connection significant. Widsith, for instance, says, "Forþon ic mæg singan and secgan spell" (l. 54). The ideas of saying and singing are again associated in the same poem, "þonne ic be songe secgan sceolde" (l. 100). Grein (ii, p. 453) gives four examples of the occurrence of the formula in Anglo-Saxon and still another for "cwæþan and singan." In the old Saxon *Heliand* the formula is extended, "settian endi singian endi seggian forth" (*Heliand* I, 33). The frequent use of this formula indicates that the distinct communication of the subject-matter was of greater importance than the merely musical element and that the recitation of the scop was something intermediate between "singing" and "saying," something similar perhaps to chanting or recitative. Some hint of this is given in the history of certain words. The word "siggwan" meant originally "to recite." The word is used by Ulfilas to indicate the reading of the holy scriptures. In the Weissenburger Catechism the prayer is sung. "Gid," the word used frequently to indicate the song of the scop, is from "giddian" which meant "to speak." In *Beowulf* this is used as a synonym for "leoþ," a song. "Leoþ wæs asungen, gleomannes gyd" (l. 1160). Moreover, the metre of old Germanic poetry was such as to preclude its being sung in our sense of the word. It would be impossible to suit the verses to any definite series of musical notes and this is true of even the most lyrical of Anglo-Saxon poems, such, for instance, as *Deor's Complaint*. In the development of the art of song the relative importance of the musical and literary elements has been reversed. With us the text is often little more than a framework for the music; with the Anglo-Saxons the music was but one of the ornamental features of the rendition of the all important narrative. Müllenhof in his introductory essay on the Holsteinish sagas, p. ix., writes:—"Da der thatsächliche, epische Inhalt, das Wort, Hauptsache ist, war das Singen jedoch mehr ein Sagen als Gesang in unserem Sinne; beide Ausdrücke werden in der alten Kunstsprache verbunden und sind fast gleichbedeutend."