

The Story of the Heath-Slayings ("Heitharviga Saga")

Author unknown

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translated by William Morris Eirikr Magnusson

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PREFACE

Heitharviga saga, as a literary product, is unquestionably the oldest of all the sagas of Iceland. Unfortunately it has come down to us in a sadly mangled state. Ours being the first attempt at an English rendering of the difficult original, we consider that a concise account of the "fata libelli" containing it, is in place at the head of our prefatory remarks.

It was acquired by purchase from Iceland by the Royal Academy of Antiquities in Sweden, through the agency of the Icelander, Jon Eggertsson, in the year 1682. (1) It is now incorporated in the Royal Library at

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Stockholm, bearing the signature 18 among the Icelandic quartos. At the time of its purchase it may or may not have been a perfect book, probably the latter was the case; (2) at any rate, when Arni Magnusson ascertained its existence in Sweden, after 1722, it was but a remnant of a book, consisting of thirty–six leaves. Of these the first 25–1/2 contained a fragment of the story of Slaying Stir and the saga of the Heath–slayings complete, with the exception of one leaf (see our translation, Chapter XXXIV). The remaining 12–1/2 leaves contained the text of the saga of Gunnlaug the Wormtongue, the best existing of that saga.

Arni Magnusson having applied to the Swedish Academy for the loan of the MS, obtained, fortunately, only the first twelve leaves of it, the obvious reason being that those leaves had become disconnected from the rest, of the existence of which, for a long time afterwards, no one had the least idea. Of these twelve leaves Arni caused his able amanuensis, Jon Olafsson from Grunnavik (1705–1778), to take a copy, in the latter part of the year 1727; but original as well as copy were both destroyed in the Copenhagen conflagration of 1728. In the following year Olafsson wrote down from memory the contents of the destroyed leaves, from which we have drawn the brief introductory matter to the story. On a journey of antiquarian research to Stockholm in 1772, Hannes Finnsson (son of the famous Church historian of Iceland, Finnur Jonsson) discovered the lost remainder of the precious fragment, the best edition of which is Jon Sigurdsson's in the second volume of *Isendingasogur*, 1847. On his edition our translation depends.

Of all the Icelandic sagas this is the most quaint in style. The author knows not yet how to handle prose for the purpose of historical composition. In one and the same sentence allocutive speech and historic narrative are blended together in the most unconscious manner. The author assumes tacitly all throughout that the reader knows all about his tale; hence he hardly ever takes the trouble to add to the Christian names of the actors the patronymic. In one instance this confidence in the reader's knowledge carries him even so far as in chap. xxxix. to refer to a person mentioned in the beginning of chap. xxxvi. (Thorod Kegward) as "he". This, more than any other Icelandic saga, affords us an insight into what the saga–telling was like during the period of oral tradition. It was the common property of teller and listener alike. This the former knew, and need not be on his guard against disjointed, loopholed delivery; the listener's knowledge supplied all troublesome little details, the teller took care of facts, characters, dramatic action.

We deemed we had no choice but to let our translation represent the peculiarity of the style of the original as faithfully as possible.

With regard to the plot of the story, it is as dramatically arranged a plot as there is in any existing Icelandic saga, and much more naively than in any. The sage of Lechmote, Thorarin, a most perfect type of a devoted foster–father, half distrustful of the ability of his fosterling, arranges the whole thing most quietly and carefully at his Willowdale retreat. He makes his fosterling pray for atonement for his brother, with the most dignified moderation, at the Althing, until, as he calculated, the rash and reckless Gisli should turn everybody's sympathy in favour of Bardi, which, in the event of a blood–feud, would be of the greatest avail to him. Next there were two important things to look to. Since at the hands of the men who stood next to make honourable satisfaction for the slaying of Bardi's brother, Hall, nothing but insult was obtained instead of atonement, and peaceful arrangement was thus excluded, the revenge must be of the most insulting nature possible. No insult could exceed that of being fought, wounded, slain by one's own faithful weapon. So Thorarin secures, in a very slippery way, the best weapon possessed by Gisli's father, Thorgaut, (3) and hands it to Bardi, while from another among the Gislungs he obtains also one for his son Thorberg, weapons that make good execution in the Heath– battle. The second point was to be well informed as to the doings of the Gislungs and other folk in Burgfirth, without arousing any suspicion of espionage with a view to a sudden raid upon the country. For this purpose the old foster–father caused two pet–horses to be removed from their pastures at Thingvellir during the last Althing at which Bardi craved atonement for his brother, while their owner, Thord of Broadford, from the North country, was attending to public business there. Burgfirth being the nearest country–side with fine pastures to the tracts of Thingvellir, everybody would naturally suppose

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that Thord's pets must have strayed thither and, not turning up, did elude search hidden in some of Burgfirth's many valleys. Thus Thorarin had a specious pretext for repeatedly sending his spies to Burgfirth to inquire, in Thord of Broadford's name, for these horses while, in reality, they went to find out all about the Gislungs and their numerous allies. These plans of Thorarin, carefully veiled from the outset, are first allowed to come out in their true aim and importance in the story, when the hour of action has struck, and the effect is really artistic. In much the same wary vein are conceived Thorarin's last injunctions as to the tactics to be adopted by Bardi. One third of his company of eighteen was to be stationed up at the Bridge by Biarnisforce as a last reserve, the second third midway between this spot and Goldmead, and the last third, consisting of Bardi himself, his two brothers, two fosterlings of his own house, and his housecarle Thord — as being the most obedient to Bardi's word — were to make the attack on the mowers of Goldmead, Gisli and his brothers. On the field of deed, therefore, no one knew that the attacking party consisted of more than six, and this, Thorarin accurately calculated, would serve to rouse the ardour of the pursuit to such an extent, that those who got first ready would not care to lose time by waiting for reinforcements coming up. Thus the Southerners plunged into the fight against great odds, and got the worst of it.

Our saga tells of events which throughout the whole saga-age of Iceland most seriously threatened to disturb the general peace of the land. A family feud had developed into a state of war between North and South, and it was really due to the cool peacemaker of Saelingsdale-tongue, Snorri, that the end was peace instead of prolonged civil feud. After the general manner of our saga, his interest in Bardi's affair seems at first to have something mysterious about it. Bardi meets him in the dusk with dropped visor, as he is crossing the Blanda in company with Thorgils Arison his brother-in-law, and forthwith Snorri tricks Thorgils, who knows nothing of Bardi's presence, into solemnly proclaiming truce for all present, whereby Thorgils unwittingly dissociated himself from his kindred and friends of Burgfirth as an active ally in case of continued feud. Then Snorri goes to Lechmote, and the two deep chiefs take counsel together, when, we may take for granted, Bardi's alliance to Snorri was first bespoken, and the latter's goodwill in the forthcoming blood-suit secured. Circumstances favoured Bardi all round now. Snorri was not forgetful of old grudges. At the head of a band of four hundred strong the Burgfirthers had foiled him but a few years before when seeking to serve a lawful summons on the slayer of his father-in-law. In the blood-suit which afterwards he brought into court at the Althing, he was non-suited by Thorstein Gislison, backed by his Burgfirth kin and neighbours. Then he took Thorstein's life, but came ingloriously out of the blood-suit, as the Ere-dwellers' story clearly hints. Bardi's case was therefore Snorri's opportunity for restoring his shaken prestige. And when at the Althing the Burgfirthers saw that he had thrown the great weight of Broadfirth into the scale of the Northlanders, they had no choice but peacefully to make the best of a serious case. In the light of this situation only we can understand, how the Burgfirthers could put up with such a galling award as to have four of their well-born men that fell in the Heath-fight left unatoned.

A remarkable popular tradition, linked to our saga, lives still in the country of Hunawater, to the effect that, after the battle of the Heath, Bardi built up the work to this day called Burg-Work, and there defended himself against the Burgfirthers, being twice attacked by them in force. The learned Paul Vidalin (1667-1727), in his "Skyringar yfir fornyrthi logbokar theirrar er Jonsbok kallast," p. 625, s.v. "virki", thus recounts the legend, as told him by his uncle, Gudbrand, son of Arngrim Jonsson (1568-1648): "So it is said, that Bardi Gudmundson of Asbiornsness caused the same work to be reared against expected attacks by the Burgfirthers, after he had avenged his brother Hall, and this, people aver, is related in the story of the Heath-slayings. Bardi set out watches in two places, one on Thorey's-nip, to keep a look-out on the Burgfirthers should they ride over Two-days' Heath, the other on Rednip, watching their ride over Ernwater Heath, whether descending into Willowdale or Waterdale. As soon as aware of their approach, the watches were to light a beacon. Even as he had guessed the Burgfirthers made their appearance (by what road the tale does not say), and Bardi with his followers went into the work, which the attackers besieged, making several attempts to carry it, but being repulsed, resolved to starve those within it, and invested it for a fortnight; but the besieged being plentifully provisioned, the Burgfirthers had to retire, having effected nothing. This narrative by Gudbrand Arngrimson, according to tradition, says that the statement is found in the story of the

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Heath-slayings." Vidalin was evidently much interested in this tradition, and collected further evidence relating to it which, though evidently later, agreed in all essential points with his uncle's.

This Gudbrand was born in 1639 (ob. 1719), and was thus forty-three years of age, when Jon Eggertsson secured the MS. of our story in Iceland. Gudbrand's father was in his day by a long way the most learned man in Iceland, his great rival, Bishop Brynjolf, appearing on the scene first towards the close of Arngrim's life. He was a collector of MSS. and author of standard works upon the history and antiquities of his country. A learned contemporary of his was Magnus Olafsson, priest of Vellir and Laufas (1591-1636), both livings being within the diocese of Holar, of which Arngrim was "officialis" for five-and-thirty years (1596-1628). These two men knew one another well enough; and both were ardent pursuers of one and the same line of study. Now Magnus made himself famous in the literary world by compiling a rearranged edition of the "Prose Edda" from "Codex Wormianus", which goes by the name of "Laufas Edda". Into this edition is incorporated a strophe and a half by Guest, son of Thorhall, the slayer of Stir, in which the killing of Stir in particular is commemorated. This being the only edition of "Edda" containing these verses, it is evident that they were culled from a copy of our saga at least six-and-forty years before that copy which Jon Eggertsson secured left the country, in all probability a good many years earlier. Now Jon Eggertsson got his copy from the Northland, so presumably it was the same that Magnus Olafsson had used for his "Edda". It stands obviously to reason that Arngrim the Learned should have known of this work in his friend's possession, and should have obtained the loan of it, and thus a possible link between the tradition known to his son, Gudbrand, and "Heitharviga saga" itself would be obtained. On the obliterated page of the original of our saga (Chapter XXXII) there certainly is reference made to Bardi's bargaining with friends and kindred for supplies for a "seta", body-guard, but apparently it seems to refer to Asbiornsness. So much seems certain, however, that what Bardi required must have been very considerable, since one man contributed no less than twelve wethers.

But whatever may be the real origin of the popular tradition, the incontestable fact remains, that once upon a time the peak-shaped fell, now called Burg-work (Borgarvirki), towering to the height of some 800 feet above the level of the sea between the two steads of Mickle-Burg (Storaborg) and Little-Burg (Litla-Borg) in Willowdale, was transformed by the labour of man into a military fortress. We ourselves had an opportunity of visiting the work in our trip to Iceland in 1871, and to inspect the by no means inconsiderable fortifications thrown, in the shape of walls made of large flat slabs, across all clefts in the natural basaltic rock which offered access to the top, standing over four feet thick, and in some places as many as ten feet high. An interesting and minute description of the work is given by Dr. B. M. Olsen, a native of the neighbourhood, in "Arbok hins islenzka fornleifafelags 1880 og 1881," pp. 99-113, accompanied by a critical dissertation on the Burg-Work tradition, and he, a first-rate antiquary and scholar, comes to the conclusion that, since in the whole history of that country-side there is no event with which the really great works of fortification on the peak can be connected, unless it be Bardi's war with the Burgfirthers, we are not authorized at present to reject the existing tradition as utterly unhistorical.

The chronology of our saga has given great trouble hitherto. Its central date is, of course, the year of the Heath-slayings, which by some is placed at 1013, others at 1014 or 1018, and by the saga itself at 1021. Vigfusson declares in favour of 1014, relying on the statements of "Grettir's saga", "that the Heath-slayings befell in the autumn that Grettir spent in Iceland after his first journey abroad, but that year was 1014" ("Timatal", 460, cf. 473-474). He attaches particular weight to the evidence of the old Resenius' annals, which also place the Heath-fight in 1014.

At the time when Vigfusson wrote his "Timatal", he, in common with contemporary scholars, believed that the annalistic writings of Iceland were as old as the historical, and the dates of the former were independent of the latter. This opinion, which originated with the Northland annalist, Bjorn Jonsson of Skarthsá, in the seventeenth century, is radically refuted by Gustav Storm in his excellent edition of "Islandske Annaler indtil 1578", where a whole array of evidence is brought together to show, that annalistic writing in Iceland could

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not have begun till a few years before 1300. For the saga period, therefore, the evidence of the annals has no real weight, since their dates depend on the evidence of the sagas themselves, according as the annalists were able to reason them out in each particular case. In this instance, thus, the evidence of Resenius' annals falls through as worthless, since evidently it depends on Grettir's saga. But what does that saga's evidence amount to?

In chapter xxviii we are told that Grettir came on a visit to his kinsman and former superior playmate, Audun of Audunstead in Willowdale, and let loose his horse to graze in the home-mead "where the grass was highest" (lothnast, highest and thickest). This visit then happened in June, before the mowing of the home-mead began; mowing of home-fields having at all times in Iceland begun, in ordinary years, at the end of June or in the first week of July. Grettir, wanting to square old scores with Audun, falls to wrestling with him, in the midst of which scuffle Bardi arrives and separates the wrestlers. Grettir now offers Bardi to join his expedition, "for I have heard that thou art bent on going south to Burgfirth this summer." Bardi accepted the offer gladly and (chap. xxxi) rode home to Asbiornsness, and then to his foster-father, "who gladly received him, and asked what he had earned in the way of helpful following," etc.

This statement of Grettir's we can pronounce at once as false. It is invented on the basis of the Heath-slayings' story; but as we know it now, at least, there is no mention made in it of any meeting between Bardi and Grettir at any time, much less of Thorarin's disapproval of Bardi's engagement of Grettir, which in "Grettir's saga" is circumstantially related, and Thorarin's harangue kept exactly in his wary, half-pious vein and anxious care not to spoil his fosterling's chances by the admission into his band of any whose fetch was one of lucklessness. It would be incomprehensible how such an incident could ever have dropped out of the Heath-fight's story having once got into it. But there are more serious objections to be noted. Grettir could not possibly have heard rumours in June or July of that which was not resolved upon till "seven weeks were left of summer," i.e., the latter end of August, and then in strict secrecy, no one knowing the least about it till the Sunday, when six weeks were left of summer, that Bardi broke the secret in the folk-mote at Thingere. That Bardi, therefore, as the Grettir clearly gives to understand, should have been abroad recruiting his force in June or July, is out of question, of course. Why, the whole plot of the Heath-slayings' story turns really on one hinge, namely, the observance of absolute secrecy as to Thorarin's intentions, until they could be carried out in a shorter time than it would take the rumour of them to cross the mountains. This statement of Grettir, therefore, which hitherto has served as a key-stone of the chronology of our saga, is in itself of no worth, being a mere fabrication. If it should happen to relate to the right year, it would be by accident only.

Now the landmarks of time that our story itself supplies are the following: the year that Bardi was outlawed at the Althing he went abroad, but was shipwrecked on the northern coast of Iceland, and spent the winter with Gudmund of Maddervales (Mothruvellir) in Eyjafirth; the next winter he was in Norway; the next to that in Denmark, and in the following summer he set sail for Iceland, arrived on the north coast, and — "By this time Gudmund was dead." Now the year of Gudmund's death was 1025; so, counting back these years of Bardi's outlawry, we see that he was in Denmark, 1024–1025, in Norway, 1023–1024, at Maddervales, 1022–1023; consequently the Thing at which he was outlawed was that of 1022, and the Heath-fight accordingly befell in 1021. Against this evidence of the saga itself Grettir's fictitious statement goes for nothing, of course. Vigfusson is by no means indifferent to these chronological facts, though he does not, on account of the great importance he attaches to Grettir's evidence, see his way to accept them. And it cannot be denied that a variety of difficult points is raised by accepting the evidence of our story. But to disallow it, considering that we have to deal with the oldest Icelandic saga, preserved in the oldest of all the saga vellums from Iceland, is obviously contrary to all rules of sound criticism. However, the whole question requires fresh overhauling, which it would be idle to attempt within the limited space of a preface to a translation of the saga.

ENDNOTES:

(1) See Sturlunga, i, Proleg. cxlvii.

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- (2) Vigfusson says the beginning of it was lost ere it came to Stockholm, Prol. liv.
- (3) The parenthesis, to the effect that this Gisli was the one that Grettir flogged, goes out. "Thorstein" in the line preceding we ought to have changed into Thorgaut, and have done so in the index.

THE STORY OF THE HEATH–SLAYINGS, Of Which Only A Part Is Left.

INTRODUCTION

Before putting before the reader our translation of this good and ancient Saga, we think it well to give a very brief abstract of part of the story of Slaying–Stir, or rather of the substance of that part, as given from memory after the destruction of the MS., an account of which will be found in the preface to this volume. We only give so much even of this abstract as is necessary to the understanding of the events told of in the Heath–slayings.

Slaying–Stir, the father–in–law of Snorri the Priest, was a violent and very masterful and unjust man. "Though he slew many men, he booted none." Amongst other high–handed deeds he makes an enemy of one Thorhall of Iorvi, and treats him so ill, that he makes up his mind to flee the country–side at a time when he thinks Stir is away at the Thing. But Stir misdoubts the matter, waylays Thorhall, and slays him after a stout resistance.

Thorhall left two children behind him, a girl, and a lad named Guest, the latter deemed somewhat of a weakling. He lives on with goodman Thorleik, who took the house of Iorvi after his father's death, and is brought up there. Some time after Slaying–Stir comes to guest at Thorleik's house where Guest is. Thorleik speaks for his fosterling to Stir, and craves some atonement for the slaying of Guest's father. Stir insults the lad grievously by the offer of a mocking atonement, much as Thorbiorn Thiodrekson does to old Howard.

Guest watches his opportunity and slays Stir in Thorleik's hall, and escapes.

He then takes refuge with his friends in Burgfirth, who, and especially Thorstein Gislison of By, harbour him, Thorstein at last sending him out to Norway, whence he goes to Constantinople, thrives there, and never comes back to Iceland.

Snorri the Priest takes up the blood–feud after Stir, and marches on the Burgfirthers who had harboured Guest, intending to take legal vengeance on them, since Guest had escaped him.

The Burgfirthers meet him in arms, and he is foiled at first; but afterwards going with a small band, and secretly, he slays Thorstein Gislison and his son Gunnar. One Kolskegg is a foremost man in this slaying; he, with others who were helping at it, goes to Norway. There certain kinsmen of Thorstein, the sons of Harek, find out that he is in the same town with them, and aim at killing him and lifting his goods. Kolskegg seeks help of an Icelander, called Hall, the son of Gudmund, a noble and generous man, who gives him a ship and goods, wherewith he escapes to England.

It must be understood that this Hall has had nothing to do with the feud between Snorri and the Burgfirthers; nevertheless, at this point begins the story of the Heath–slayings. Hall, being now unshipped, takes berth for Iceland with a man named Thorgils. The sons of Harek find out that Hall has taken their foe out of their power, and fix the feud on Hall, just as Snorri did on Thorstein Gislison; they entrap him on an island off the coast of Norway, where he and his shipmates had gone aland, and slay him. The shipmaster, Thorgils, brings all Hall's belongings to Iceland, but keeps this slaying hidden till the Thing of the next summer. There he tells of it, and Bardi, the second son of Gudmund (and henceforth the hero of the story), offers his brother's goods

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to Thorgils, and hardly can get him to take half of them.

Old Gudmund (the father) goes home from the Thing, so heavy-hearted at the death of his son, that he dies in a month's time. Hall was looked upon as far the best of Gudmund's sons, and Bardi seems to have been accounted of little worth.

It is told, that in the autumn after the Thing above-mentioned, Bardi sat down in the seat of his dead brother; whereon his mother fetches him a clout on the head, and bids him be off, and not to dare sit in Hall's seat while he is yet unavenged.

However, on Bardi lies the burden of the blood-feud. But once more, as in the earlier case, the slayers themselves are out of his reach; for the sons of Harek, shortly after they had slain Hall, were cast away and drowned. Therefore it is to the Burgfirthers, their kindred, that Bardi must turn for atonement for his brother; and the feud that follows takes the shape of something like a war between the Burgfirthers, the southern men, and the men of the north.

Bardi takes counsel of one Thorarin, a wise and foreseeing man, who dwelt at Lechmote in Willowdale, and was Bardi's foster-father. Thorarin advises him to ask weregild of Harek on behalf of his sons at the next Althing, and warns him to be moderate and forbearing. Bardi follows his counsel, but Harek, being old, and having handed all his own goods over to his heirs, says he cannot pay, and turns him off on to his kindred. Bardi goes home quietly, sees Thorarin, who bids him claim atonement again peacefully as before; but he gets no further with his claim, but is well spoken of by all the Mote for his mild conduct of his case.

The third summer Bardi goes once more to Thorarin, before he rides to the Thing he bids him claim atonement in the same way as before, but tells him that he thinks he will not have to do this again; for there is a man come into the business, Gisli, the son of Thorstein, (1) a boastful and masterful man (the same man to whom Grettir the Strong gave the flogging), who will give him such an answer, that the case will be easier to handle than before.

Bardi says he is loth to crave atonement again, but will so do, because he knows that Thorarin's counsels will turn out well for him.

We are now told of a man called Lyng-Torfi, akin to the Gislungs (i.e., the kindred of Thorstein Gislison). He was the greatest scoundrel and ruffler, a strong man, a liar, and full of injustice. He would beat men if he got not his will of them, and lifted what he might; he was here and there about the land, and was content nowhere.

This man Thorarin bade Bardi bring north with him, if he were at the Thing, for that something would come of it.

So Bardi comes to the Thing, and finds Gisli there, and others of his kin, the Burgfirthers.

On a day amidst of the Thing, Bardi goes to the Hill of Laws, and says:

"So are things waxen, that I have here craved boot for Hall my brother twice already; need drave me thereto, but little heed was paid to my case. But now meseemeth that there is some hope in thee, Gisli, for paying somewhat, so I need no longer welter in doubt; and most men will say that we have not pushed the case very hardly; therefore art thou the more bounden to answer well and goodly."

No man answered before Gisli; he spake, leaning forward on his spear-shaft: "Well, we ought to answer somewhat, whereas thou drivest on thine errand, and hast called on me openly, although I deem myself

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nowise straightly bound up with this affair. Now last summer I was in England at the place called Thuvaston; I sat in the market-place, and had some money to spend, and it lay beside me in a scrip, wherein were seven marks of silver. Now there rode through the market certain hair-brained fellows, and one of them came up to me, and stuck his spear into my scrip, and tossed it up to him, and rode away therewith, and no more I wot thereof. Now that will I make over to thee for thy brother's gild; for it seemeth to me this is like to thy case, for I account that silver as a waif and stray; but no money else will we lay down."

Then spake Eid Skeggison: "Let giant hold his peace when naked at fire; evilly and witlessly is this done, whereas such great men have part herein."

Gisli answereth: "He shouteth afar that fighteth few; and that is to be looked for of thee that thou wouldst speak up for thy kindred even as we have now heard;" and he falls to foul words against Eid. But Eid said: "We care not to bandy foul words with thee."

Now men speak with much good will of Bardi's case, and think that the answer has been heavy, so mildly as the claim was put forward withal.

Bardi meets Lyng-Torfi at the Thing, and bids him home to him, as Thorarin had counselled. Bardi goes to Thorarin, and tells him what had happened, and says that it seemed to him to have gone heavily. But Thorarin said:

"Now are things come whither I would, and that has now been laboured out, that wise men look upon the case even in the way we do ourselves; so that it is now less hard to see where the revenge shall be brought home."

Bardi bade him be master therein.

That summer there was with Bardi in his Thing-journey one Thord, the goodman at Broadford in Waterdale; he had two horses, all white except for black ears. These horses he deemed beasts so dear, that he would not miss them for any other horses. But it befell for Thord's faring-mishap that both these horses vanished away.

Now Lyng-Torfi abode behind at Lechmote, and Thorarin treated him wondrous well, so that Lyng-Torfi was light of heart.

There was a man hight Thorgaut, who dwelt at a stead called Sleylech in Burgfirth, (2) a man now much stricken in years, but he had been the stoutest of fighters in his youth. He had a wife, and they two were nought of one mind together, one willing this, the other that; she was exceeding shrewish, and but middling wise. Thorgaut had good weapons in his coffer, which he had not handled since he had given up warfare.

Now a little after these things, Thorarin fell to talk with Lyng-Torfi, and asked him, how friendly he was with his kinsfolk. He answered that there was little love lost between them.

"Wilt thou strike a bargain with me?" says Thorarin. "It is told me that Thorgaut thy kinsman has a good sword, and if thou wilt go and get it for me, I will give thee some goodly stallions."

Lyng-Torfi is glad enough to do this; so Thorarin hands over to him a big knife to give to Thorgaut's wife, so that she may abet him.

"I hear tell," says Thorarin, "that those weapons are wealthy of victory. Now thou wilt not be at a loss, how to hatch a lie for a likely cause why thou cravest the weapons."

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Lyng-Torfi bids him have no fear of that, and he goes eagerly into the bargain. Then he runs south over the Heath, and comes of an evening down into Whitewater-side to a kinsman of his, Thorbiorn, the son of Bruni, who dwelt at the Walls. He is there the night over, and bids him lend him a weapon, saying that a certain Eastman north in Oxdale had challenged him to a single fight about a woman whom both would have; and that the appointed day was in a half-month's space, and that he might nowhere get a weapon; and he tells a likely tale as to where he had had night-harbours in his journey. Thorbiorn answers that this will be all a lie, and that he will get no weapon of him. Lyng-Torfi was ill content, and ran over to Thorgaut, who had the sword, and tells him what business he has on hand, and about his night-harbours as at the first house.

He was well taken in, but nothing more. Then he prays Thorgaut to lend him a weapon, and says that he will never be in more need of it than now. Thorgaut answers, that other things lie nearer to him than to meddle in Lyng-Torfi's brawls with other folk, and that he may look to his own women-affairs himself, nor should he let go out of his hand the sword to him. So Lyng-Torfi goes to Thorgaut's wife, and tells her of his matter, and gives her the knife; she takes it, and deems it a right good thing, and runs at her swiftest to her husband, and is very shrewish in talk, saying that it is a great shame that he will not help his kindred at a pinch. "What hast thou, an old fretting carle, to do with such a good weapon now thou art off thy feet? It lieth rusting in the chest-bottom, and by this time there is little avail in it."

He answers, as before, that Lyng-Torfi is not so much to him, that he would let his sword go out of his hand to him, that no man would ever have done such a thing as to dare beset him with guile.

Then she goes and breaks open the chest wherein lay the sword, and hands it over to Lyng-Torfi, who straightway steals away for the north, and brings it to Thorarin. Thorarin says that he has carried through his errand well, and bids him take horses and fare first northward a while, to put himself out of the way of his kinsmen. Lyng-Torfi thanks him for the good gift, goes away with the horses, and is out of the story.

[The old MS. of the "Heath-slayings Saga" begins here, but with the broken end of a chapter which will not yield any consecutive tale; and which consequently we omit.]

ENDNOTES:

- (1) Thorsteinson, read Thorgautson. Cf. Preface.
- (2) "There was a man hight Thorgaut, who dwelt at a stead called Sleylech in Burgfirth," The course of the story afterward, especially the description of the journey of Bardi's spies, makes it quite clear, that Thorgaut dwelt, not at Sleylech, but at Thorgautstead in Whitewaterside. The meadow Goldmead was a portion, as still it is, under the name of "teigarnir" = the Meads, of the land of Thorgautstead. This plot of land Bardi's spies have clear in view from Hallwardstead, the nearest house, on the southern side of Whitewater, to Thorgautstead (Chapter XXV). Towards Thorgautstead Gisli flies from Goldmead and is slain against the homefield fence, and carried home and laid at the feet of his father, who is tacitly recognized as the master of the place (Chapter XXVII). From Hallwardstead it was impossible to have any view at all of the house of Sleylech, which from there is hidden behind the southern shoulder of Sidefell (i.e., Whitewater-side-fell), being situate on its northern slope facing Thwartwater. Olafsson's account here of Lyng-Torfi's slippery errand is very faulty. The later saga makes it quite evident that he got a sword from each of the two, Thorgaut and Thorbiorn Brunison. On the day that Bardi starts for the south, Thorarin gives him a sword, telling him of Lyng-Torfi's errand, and saying: "But Thorberg my son hath the other weapon, and Thorbiorn owns that, but Thorgaut owns that

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which thou hast" (Chapter XXIII); in slaying Gisli, Bardi "hewed at him with the sword Thorgaut's-loom" (Chapter XXVII); and in the fight on the Heath both swords turn up again, one wielded by Bardi, the other by Thorberg -- it is a mere slip, on the part of the saga, when Thorberg is made to wield the sword of Thorgaut instead of that of Thorbiorn (Chapter XXX).

CHAPTER XVI. Thorarin Bids Bardi Concerning The Choosing Of Men.

Now Bardi and his brethren had on hand much wright's work that summer, and the work went well the summer through, whereas it was better ordered than heretofore. Now summer had worn so far that but six weeks (1) thereof were left. Then fares Bardi to Lechmote to meet Thorarin his fosterer; often they talked together privily a long while, and men knew not clearly what they said.

"Now will there be a man-mote," says Thorarin, "betwixt the Hope and Huna-water, at the place called Thing-ere. But I have so wrought it that heretofore none have been holden.

"Now shalt thou fare thither and prove thy friends; because now I look for it that many men will be together there, since man-motes have so long been put off. In crowds they will be there, and I ween that Haldor thy foster-brother will come thither. Crave thou fellowship of him and avail, if thine heart is anywise set on faring away from the country-side and the avenging of thy brother.

"A stead there is called Bank, lying west of Huna-water;" there dwelt a woman hight Thordis, by-named Gefn, a widow; there was a man with her over her housekeeping, hight Odd, a mighty man of his hands, not exceeding wealthy nor of great kin, but a man well renowned. "Of him shalt thou crave following; for he shall rule his answer himself."

"In that country is a place called Blizzard-mere, where are many steads, one of which is Middleham;" there dwelt a man hight Thorgisl; he was by kin mother's sister's son of Gefn's-Odd; a valiant man and a good skald, a man of good wealth, and a mighty man of his hands. "Call thou on him to fare with thee."

"A stead there is hight Bowerfell, twixt Swinewater and Blanda; it is on the Necks to the westward." There dwelt a man hight Eric, by-named Wide-sight; he was a skald and no little man of might. "Him shalt thou call to thy fellowship."

"In Longdale is a house called Audolfstead," where dwelt the man hight Audolf; "he is a good fellow and mighty of his hands; his brother is Thorwald." He is not told of as having aught to do with the journey; he dwelt at the place called Evendale, which lieth up from Swinewater. "There are two steads so called." He was the strongest man of might of all the North-country. "Him shalt thou not call on for this journey, and the mood of his mind is the reason for why."

"There is a stead called Swinewater;" and there dwelt the man hight Summerlid, who was by-named the Yeller, wealthy of fee and of good account. There dwelt in the house with him his daughter's son who hight Thorliot, Yeller's fosterling, a valiant man. "Pray him to be of thy fellowship."

A man hight Eyolf dwelt at Asmund's-nip, "which is betwixt the Water and Willowdale." "Him shalt thou meet and bid him fare with thee; he is our friend."

"Now meseemeth," saith he, "that little will come of it though thou puttest this forward at the man-mote; but sound them there about the matter, and say thou that they shall not be bound to fare with thee, if thou comest not to each one of them on the Saturday whenas it lacketh yet five weeks of winter. (2) And none such shalt

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thou have with thee who is not ready to go, for such an one is not right trusty. Therefore shalt thou the rather choose these men to fare with thee than others of the country—side, whereas they are near akin to each other; they are men of good wealth, and so also their kinsmen no less; so that they are all as one man. Withal they are the doughtiest men of all who are here in Willowdale, and in all our parishes; and they will be best willed towards thy furtherance who are most our friends. Now is it quite another thing to have with one good men and brave, rather than runagates untried, men of nought, to fall back upon, if any trouble happen. Now withal thy home—men are ready to fare with thee, and thy neighbours, who are both of thy kindred and thine alliance: such as Eyolf of Burg thy brother—in-law, a doughty man, and a good fellow."

"There is a stead called Ternmere in Westhope, where dwell two brothers." One was hight Thorod, the other Thorgisl; they were the sons of Hermund, and nephews (3) of Bardi as to kinship; men of good wealth, great champions, and good of daring. "These men will be ready to fare with thee."

Two brothers yet are named who lived at Bardi's home, one hight Olaf, the other Day, sons of a sister of Bardi's mother, and they had grown up there in Gudmund's house; "they be ready to fare with thee."

Two men more are named, one hight Gris and by—named Kollgris, a man reared there at Asbiorn's—ness. He was a deft man and the foreman of them there, and had for long been of good—will toward them.

The other hight Thord, by—named Fox; he was the fosterling of Thurid and Gufimund. They had taken him a little bairn from off the road, and had reared him. He was a full ripe man, and well of his hands; and men say that there was nought either of word or deed that might not be looked for of him; Gudmund and his wife loved him much, and made more of him than he was of worth. "This man will be ready to fare from home with thee."

Now are the men named who were to fare with Bardi.

And when they had held such talk, they sundered.

ENDNOTES:

- (1) "Six weeks", read seven weeks.
- (2) "Say thou that they shall not be bound to fare with thee, if thou comest not to each one of them on the Saturday whenas it lacketh as yet five weeks of winter." As stated in the preceding note, this talk between Thorarin and Bardi took place when seven weeks were yet left of the summer. Chapter XVII we see that Bardi went to the man—mote on the Sunday preceding the Saturday of the summer week already mentioned, which Sunday, of course, fell within that week which was the sixth, counting backwards, from the end of the summer. Winter began on the Saturday before St. Luke's day, Oct. 18th, or on St. Luke's day itself, if it fell on a Saturday. By the chronology of our saga, the Heath—slayings took place in 1021 (see Preface). In that year, Oct. 18th fell on a Wednesday; winter then began on the previous Saturday, Oct. 14th; the Friday and Thursday, Oct. 13th and 12th, preceding that, were the so—called Winternights, so that the last week of summer closed on Wednesday, Oct. 11th. Hence, Thursday, Aug. 24th, begins the seventh but last week of summer. Within this week then the raid on Burg firth was resolved upon. Nothing, however, was let out about it, till Bardi came to the folkmote at Thingere that was held on the following Sunday, which fell within the sixth but last week of summer, that is to say, on Sept. 3rd. On the Saturday following, within the fifth but last week of summer, i.e., on Sept. 9th, the band was gathered in by Bardi, cf. Chapter

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(3) "Nephews", read cousins. They were the sons of Hermund, brother to Gudmund, Bardi's father.

CHAPTER XVII. Of Bardi's Way-Fellows.

The Lord's day cometh Bardi to Lechmote, and rideth on thence to the man-mote; and by then he came was much folk there come, and good game is toward. Now were men eager for game, whereas the man-motes had been dropped so long. Little was done in the case, though men were busy in talk at that meeting.

Now the foster-brethren Haldor and Bardi fell to talk together, and Bardi asks whether he would fare with him somewhat from out the country-side that autumn. Says Haldor: "Belike it will be found that on my part I utter not a very manly word, when I say that my mind is not made up for this journey. Now all things are ready for my faring abroad, on which faring I have been twice bent already. But I have settled this in my mind, if ever perchance I may have my will, to be to thee of avail that may be still greater, shouldst thou be in need of it, and ever hereafter if thou be hard bestead; and this also is a cause hereof, that there are many meeter than I for the journey that, as my mind tells me, thou art bent on."

Bardi understood that so it was as he said, and he said that he would be no worse friend to him than heretofore.

"But I will bid thee somewhat," says Haldor; "it befell here last summer, that I fell out with a man hight Thorarin, and he was wounded by my onslaught. (1) He is of little account for his own sake, but those men claim boot for him of whose Thing he is, and of much account are they. Now it is not meet for me to put Eilif and Hoskuld from the boot, so I will thou make peace for me in the matter, as I cannot bring myself to it, whereas I have nay-said hitherto to offer them atonement."

Then goeth Bardi forthwith to meet Eilif and Hoskuld, and straightway takes up the word on behalf of Haldor, and they bespeak a meeting between themselves for the appeasing of the case, when it lacked four weeks of winter, at the Cliffs, Thorarin's dwelling.

Now cometh Bardi to speech with Gefn's-Odd that he should fare with him south to Burgfirth.

Odd answereth his word speedily: "Yea, though thou hadst called on me last winter, or two winters ago, I had been all ready for this journey."

Then met Bardi Thorgisl, the sister's son of Odd's mother, and put the same words before him. He answereth: "That will men say, that thou hast not spoken hereof before it was to be looked for, and fare shall I if thou willest."

Then meeteth he Arngrim, the fosterling of Audolf, and asked him if he would be in the journey with him; and he answereth: "Ready am I, when thou art ready."

The same talk held he with all them afore-named, and all they took his word well.

Now spake Bardi: "In manly wise have ye dealt with me herein; now therefore will I come unto you on the Saturday, when it lacketh five weeks of winter; and if I come not thus, then are ye nowise bound to fare with me."

Now ride men home from the man-mote, and they meet, the foster-father and son, Thorarin and Bardi, and Bardi tells him of the talk betwixt him and Haldor. Thorarin showed that it liked him well, and said that the

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journey would happen none the less though Haldor fared not. "Yea, he may yet stand thee in good stead. And know that I have made men ware of this journey for so short a while, because I would that as late as might be aforehand should it be heard of in the country of those Burgfirthers."

ENDNOTES:

- (1) "It befell here last summer, that I fell out with a man hight Thorarin, and he was wounded by my onslaught," This refers to that endbit of a chapter with which the fragment of the Heathslayings' story now begins in the old MS. (mentioned in our introductory notice to the story). We give it here in a literal translation as it stands: --

"Six days. Now Haldor misses the horses and seeks for them, and finds them, and deems they have been sadly used and goes now on a meeting with Thorarin; and now he loses his temper to him and dealeth him such a wound as was a sore hurt to him howbeit not baneful; so this matter cometh before the two, Hoskuld and Eilif, and they crave that boot be done for their Thingman. To that matter he (Haldor) taketh nowise readily, nor did they come to peace on that affair; and thus done, the matter now stands on awhile." Bardi arranged with the two gothar to settle the matter on behalf of Haldor when four weeks were still left of summer, (Chapter XVII), and amid the broken readings from which we have given a summary (Chapter XXXII), one gathers that Bardi came to the arranged peace-meeting, but what the result was can only be guessed, peace apparently.

CHAPTER XVIII. Of Bardi And His Workman Thord The Fox.

Now wears the time, till Friday of the sixth week, and at nones of that day home came the home-men of Bardi, and had by then pretty much finished with their hay-work.

Bardi and his brethren were without, when the workmen came, and they greeted them well. They had their work-tools with them, and Thord the Fox was dragging his scythe behind him.

Quoth Bardi: "Now draggeth the Fox his brush behind him."

"So is it," saith Thord, "that I drag my brush behind me, and cock it up but little or nought; but this my mind bodes me, that thou wilt trail thy brush very long or ever thou avenge Hall thy brother."

Bardi gave him back no word in revenge, and men go to table.

Those brethren were speedy with their meat, and stood up from table straightway, and Bardi goeth up to Thord the Fox and spake with him, laying before him the work he shall do that evening and the day after, Saturday to wit.

Forty haycocks lay yet ungathered together in Asbiorn's-ness; and he was to gather them together, and have done with it that evening. "Moreover, to-morrow shalt thou fare to fetch our bell-wether hight the Flinger, whereas our wethers be gone from the sheepwalks, and come into the home-pastures."

Now he bade Thord to this, because the wether was worse to catch than other sheep, and swifter withal. "Now further to-morrow shalt thou go to Ambardale, and fetch home the five-year-old ox which we have there, and slaughter him, and bring all the carcass south to Burg on Saturday. (1) Great is the work, but if thou win it not, then shalt thou try which of us bears the brush most cocked thenceforward."

Thord answered and said that often he had heard his big threats; and thereof he is nowise blate.

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Now rideth Bardi in the evening to Lechmote, and the brethren together, and Bardi and Thorarin talk together the evening through.

ENDNOTES:

- (1) "Burg", the homestead of Bardi's brother-in-law, Eyolf, is defined, Chapter XXXIX, as Burg the southernmost. To this day there are two homesteads in the locality between lower Willowdale-water and Westhope-water, named Burg the "northernmost" and "southernmost," the one north, the other south of Burgwork (cf. Preface). At present the northernmost is by a great deal the more considerable property of the two.

CHAPTER XIX. Concerning Thord The Fox.

Now it is to be told of Thord's business, how he got through with it. He gathered together the hay which had stood less safely; and when he came home, then was the shepherd about driving the sheep out to the Cliffs, and Thord rides the horse whereon he had been carting the evening long. Now he finds the flock of wethers to which he had been told off, but could not overhaul them till he got out to Hope-oyce; so he slaughters that wether and rideth home with the carcass. By this time he has foundered the horse; so he takes another, and gallops over the dale, as forthright the way lay, nor did he heed whether he was faring by night or by day. He cometh to Ambardale in early morn, and getteth the ox, and slaughtereth him and dighteth him, bindeth the carcass on his horse, and going his ways cometh home again, and layeth down the carcass. Then he taketh out the carcass of the wether, and when he cometh back one limb of the ox is gone. No good words spake Thord thereover; but a man owneth that he had taken it away, and bids him be nought so bold as to speak aught thereof unless he would have a clout. So Thord taketh the rest of the carcass, and fareth south to Burg as he had been bidden.

There Alof, the sister of Bardi, and her foster-mother taketh in the flesh-meat. The foster-mother also hight Alof, a wise woman, and foster-mother also of Bardi and the other sons of Gudmund. She was called Kiannok, and thus by that name were the two Alofs known apart. Alof, Bardi's fosterer, was wise exceedingly; she could see clearly a many things, and was well-wishing to the sons of Gudmund. She was full of lore, and ancient things were stored in her mind.

CHAPTER XX. Of The Horses Of Thord Of Broadford.

Now must it be told what wise they talked together, Thorarin his fosterer and Bardi, before Bardi got to the road; they talked of a many things.

It was early of the Saturday morning, whereon he should go meet his fellows who were to fare with him. But when he was ready to ride, there were led forth two horses, white with black ears either of them. Those horses did Thord of Broadford own, and they had vanished away that summer from the Thing.

Now spake Thorarin: "Here are Thord's horses; thou shalt go and bring them to him, and take no reward therefor: neither is it worth rewarding; for I it was who caused them to vanish away, and they have been in my keeping, and hard enough matter for me has it been to see to their not being taken and used. But for this cause let I take these horses, that meseemed it would be more of an errand to ask after these horses than mere jades. So I have often sent men south to Burgfirth this summer to ask after them. Meseemed that was a noteworthy errand, and that they would not see through my device; and I have but newly sent a man south, and from the south will he come to-morrow, and tell us tidings of the South-country."

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Now just then was there a market toward at Whitewater-meads, and ships were come from the main but a little while before these things befell.

CHAPTER XXI. Bardi Gathers In His Following.

Now rideth Bardi thence and cometh to Bank, whereas dwelt Thordis, and there stood a saddled horse and a shield there beside him, and they rode home to the house with much din in the home-mead over the hard field.

Without there was a man, and a woman with him, who was washing his head; and these were Thordis and Odd, and she had not quite done the washing of his head, and had not yet washed the lather therefrom.

So straightway when he saw Bardi he sprang up, and welcomed him laughing.

Bardi took his greeting well, and bade the woman finish her work and wash him better.

Even so he let her do, and arrayed himself and went with Bardi.

Now came they north over Blanda to Broadford, and brought Thord his horses,

It is to be told that, at that time in the week just worn, was Thorgisl Arason ridden north to Eyiafirth, whereas he was to be wedded at Thwartwater, and he was to be looked for from the north the next week after. Thord takes his horses well, and offers some good geldings as a reward. But Bardi said that he would take no reward therefor; and such, he said, was the bidding of him who had found the horses. "Thou, friend," saith he, "shalt be my friend at need."

Then Bardi rides into Longdale, and over the meadows close anigh to the stead of Audolf; and they saw how a man rode down from the home-mead, and they deemed it would be Arngrim their fellow; and he rideth with them.

Now ride they west over Blanda to Eric Widesight, and they came there by then the sheep were being tended at morning-meal time, betwixt noon and day-meal, and they come on the shepherd and ask him whether Eric were at home.

He said that Eric was a-horseback at sunrise, "and now we know not whither he has ridden."

"What thinkest thou mostlike as to where he has ridden?" says Bardi. For it cometh into his mind that he will have slunk away, and will not fare with them. But nought was it found to be so that he had slunk off away. Now they saw two men riding down along Swinewater; for thence from the stead one could see wide about, and they knew them for Eric Wide-sight and Thorliot, Yeller's fosterling. They met there whereas the water hight Laxwater falleth out of Swinewater, and either greeted the other well.

Now they ride till they come to Thorgisl of Middleham; they greeted each other well and ride away thence and come hard on Gorge-water. Then said Bardi that men should ride to the stead at Asmund's-nip and meet Eyolf Oddson. "There rideth a man," said he, "nor laggardly either, from the stead, and down along the river; and meseemeth," saith he, "that there will be Eyolf; I deem that he will be at the ford by then we come there; so ride we forth."

So did they, and saw a man by the ford, and knew him for Eyolf; and they met and greeted each other well. Then they go their ways and come to the place called Ash in Willowdale. Then there came riding up to meet Bardi and his fellowship three men in coloured raiment, and they met presently, whereas each were riding

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towards the other; and two sister's sons of Bardi were in that company, and one hight Lambkar and the other Hun; but the third man in their fellowship was a Waterdaler. They had all come out and landed west in Willowdale, but Gudbrand their father and Gudrun their mother dwelt west in Willowdale, at the stead called thereafter Gudbrandstead. (1)

Now was there a joyful meeting betwixt those kinsmen, whereas Bardi met his sister's sons, and either told the other what tidings there were.

Bardi tells of his journey, whither he was bound.

These men were eighteen winters old, and had been abroad one winter. They were the noblest of men both for goodlihead and might, and goodly crafts and deftness, and moreover they would have been accounted of as doughty of deed even had they come already to their full age.

Now they took counsel together, and said that they were minded to betake them to the journey with them, but their fellow fared away into Willowdale.

Now Bardi rides till he comes to Lechmote, and tells his fosterer how matters stood. Thorarin says: "Now shalt thou ride home to Asbiorn's–ness; (2) but to–morrow will I ride to meet thee, and Thorberg my son with me; and then will I ride on the way with you."

ENDNOTES:

- (1) "They had all come out and landed west in Willowdale, but Gudbrand, their father, and Gudrun, their mother, dwelt west (ut) in Willowdale, at the stead called thereafter Gudbrandstead." "Bardi", on returning from his banishment, "betook himself to Gudbrand his brother–in–law," Chapter XXXIX. After the Althing at which he was betrothed to Snorri's daughter, "Bardi rides to Waterdale to his alliances," and leaving Snorri the next spring after he married his daughter, "Bardi goeth north to Waterdale, where he tarrieth with Gudbrand his brother–in–law," Chapter XL. Kalund has made a careful inquiry into the local statements noted here, and avers positively that no tradition now exists to show where a house called Gudbrandstead might have been either in Willowdale or Waterdale. In the story of the Waterdale–men (Vigfusson's ed., 1860, pp. 61, 194), Gudbrand Thorsteinson, the grandson of Ingimund the Old, the settler, is stated to have dwelt at Gudbrandstead, which undoubtedly then was a house in Waterdale. But he could hardly have been alive at this time, seeing that his father was a mature man about 935, when Ingimund died. Kalund is inclined to accept the reading Willowdale in the two places where Waterdale occurs, because one of Bardi's brothers–in–law, Eyolf of Burg, notably lived in Willowdale, and Bardi had only two of them, at least mentioned in the saga, so the statement that he rode "to Waterdale to his alliances," would not agree with the saga in the case of one of them; both, therefore, he thinks, must have lived in the valley where the one that was well known, lived.
- (2) "Now shalt thou ride home to Asbiorn's–ness," This was the Saturday, Sept. 9th (Endnote #2, Chapter XVI); next day, Sunday, Sept. 10th, the start for the south is made, and Nial's house reached at night, Chapter XXII–XXIV; Monday, Sept. 11th, they ride from Nial's and rest for the night on the Heath, Chapter XXV; Tuesday, Sept. 12th, they ride down into Copsedale, where "they sleep the night away," Chapter

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XXV; Wednesday, Sept. 13th, early in the morning, the attack is made and Gisli slain; late in the day the Heath–battle is fought, and the darkness of night saves Bardi and his from Illugi's pursuit, Chapter XXVII–XXXII.

CHAPTER XXII. Of The Egging–On of Thurid.

Now fares Bardi home with his fellowship, and abides at home that night. On the morrow Kollgris arrays them breakfast; but the custom it was that the meat was laid on the board before men, and no dishes there were in those days. Then befell this unlooked– for thing, that three portions were gone from three men. Kollgris went and told Bardi thereof.

"Go onighting the board," said he, "and speak not thereof before other men."

But Thurid (1) said that to those sons of hers he should deal no portion of breakfast, but she would deal it.

Kollgris did even so, and set forth the board, a trencher for each man, and set meat thereon.

Then went in Thurid and laid a portion before each of those brethren, and there was now that ox–shoulder cut up in three.

Taketh up Steingrim the word and said: "Hugely is this carved, mother, nor hast thou been wont to give men meat in such measureless fashion. Unmeasured mood there is herein, and nigh witless of wits art thou become." (2)

She answereth: "No marvel is this, and nought hast thou to wonder thereat; for bigger was Hall thy brother caryen, and I heard ye tell nought thereof that any wonder was that."

She let a stone go with the flesh–meat for each one of them; and they asked what that might betoken. She answereth: "Of that ye brethren have most which is no more likely for avail than are these stones (for food), insomuch as ye have not dared to avenge Hall your brother, such a man as he was; and far off have ye fallen away from your kinsmen, the men of great worth, who would not have sat down under such shame and disgrace as yea long while have done, and gotten the blame of many therefor."

Then she walked up along the floor shrieking, and sang a stave:

"I say that the cravers of songs of the battle
Now soon shall be casting their shame–word on Bardi.
The tale shall be told of thee, God of the wound–worm,
That thy yore–agone kindred with shame thou undoest;
Unless thou, the ruler of light once a–lying
All under the fish–road shall let it be done,
That the lathe–fire's bidders at last be red–hooded.
Let all folk be hearkening this song of my singing."

Then they thrust the trenchers from them with all that was on them, and go to their horses and get ready at their speediest.

That was on a Sunday when it lacked five weeks of winter.

So they leap a–horseback and ride away out of the home–mead.

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Now see those brethren of Thurid their mother, that she was gotten aback of the horse that they called Yokeard, and had called to her a housecarle for her fellow, a man not named, but of whom it is said that he had no bottom of wits.

Then said Bardi: "This turneth toward mishap that she has taken to this journey; and this might we well lack; so now let us seek rede and help her to come down (off the nag)."

Then he calleth to him his home-men Olaf and Day.

"Now shall ye two," said Bardi, "ride to meet her, and talk with her seemly and fair; but do as I bid you. Ye shall say that it is well that she has come on the journey with us, and bid the house-carle give her good following. Ye shall steady her in the saddle, and so ride until you come as far forth as Saxlech;" it falls out of Westhope-water and down into Willowdale-water. A piece of road whereon folk are wont to give spur to their horses, leads to the brook from the north, and also forth from it; "and then shall ye spring her saddle-girths. Day shall do that, making as if he would girth up her horse, when ye come to the brook; then down with her from horseback, so that she fall into the brook, saddle and all; and bring the horse away with you."

So they rode to meet her, and greeted her well. She saith: "So it is ye two, who betake you to this, to ride to meet me and honour me, rather than my sons?"

"They bade us do this errand," say they.

She says: "For this cause am I come on this journey, that then meseemeth the less will certain great deeds fall short, whereas there shall be no lack of egging on now, and forsooth there is need thereof."

They say that it will be of much avail this her faring with them. So they rode till they came up to Saxlech; then spake Day: "Thy follower is but a natural, Thurid, and he has not so girthed thine horse that it will do; it is a mighty shame to have such a thing as he to follow doughty women."

"Do thou girth the horse better, then," says she, "and follow me thereafter."

He falls to now, and springs the girths of the carline's horse, and so she, saddle and all, falls into Saxlech, even as those fellows had been bidden. Thurid ran no risk of hurt there, and crawled out of the brook. The two men rode away, and had the horse with them. Thurid got home in the evening with her house-carle, and was nowise fain of her errand.

ENDNOTES:

- (1) Thurid, Bardi's mother, is represented in our saga as a woman in the enjoyment of full energy of middle life. She strikes her son, a married man, in the face (Introduction), she bestirs herself busily in arraying for her sons an insulting meal, sings and raves, and lastly, means to take the command of the expedition. Yet at this time she has two grandsons eighteen years of age, and her husband was, if we may trust Jon Olafsson's memorial rehearsal of the lost leaves, a very old man when he heard of the death of his son. In our saga it is not stated whose daughter Thurid was, but we learn from "Landnama" and "Laxdaela saga" that she was daughter of Olaf Peacock, who, about 970, married Thorgerd, daughter of Egil Skallagrimson. Now even supposing she was the oldest of his children, and married very young, say about 990, and gave birth to her daughter Gudrun c. 992, and she again married very young, say about

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1012, she could not have sons of eighteen years old by this time. Vigfusson's suggestion that Thurid may have been rather a sister of Olaf, who indeed had a sister of that name, consequently also sister to Hallgerd of Lithend fame, seems only plausible.

- (2) "Nigh witless of wits art thou become," ertu naer ovitandi vits (Islendinga sogur, ii. 337, 15). This remarkable passage is a quotation from the Older Edda, hitherto unnoticed, and, if we are not mistaken, the only direct one as yet pointed out in the sagas, whose silence in this respect has naturally puzzled all critics; that it is set forth in a negative instead of a positive form, because the context requires it, makes, of course, no difference. The illustration is found in Havamal, strophe 18:

"Sa. einn veit, es vitha ratar ok hefir fjolth um farith, hverjo gethi styrir gumna hverr, sa es vitandi er vitz; i.e.:" "one wot I, who wanderth wide and many farings fareth, to know what mind each man may wield that wots he's wise of wits." (*) Given a negative turn to the last line of the strophe, we have exactly Steingrim's half-despairing reproach to his mother, which even in the context of the original stands out convincingly as an endeavour of a pious son to veil by a venerable quotation of exquisite delicacy the direct rude term which passion prompted, namely, "vitlaus" = mad, maniacal. (*) To let the last line refer to the experienced and observing traveller, as the Corpus Poeticum, i., p. 3, does, makes this fine strophe quite meaningless.

CHAPTER XXIII. How Foster-Father And Foster-Mother Array Bardi.

Now Bardi and his flock ride their ways till they are but a little short of Burg. Then ride up certain men to meet them, who but Thorarin the Priest, Bardi's fosterer, and Thorberg his son.

They straightway fall to talk, and the fosterer and fosterling come to speech. "Nay, foster-father," saith Bardi, "great is the sword which thou layest there across thy knee."

"Hast thou not seen me have this weapon before, thou heedful and watchful?" saith Thorarin. "So it is, I have not had it before. And now shall we two shift weapons; I shall have that which thou now hast."

So did they; and Bardi asks whence it came to him. He told him, with all the haps of how it fared betwixt him who owned it and Lyng-Torfi, and how he had drawn him in to seek the weapons. "But Thorberg my son hath the other weapon, and Thorbiorn owns that, but Thorgaut owns that which thou hast. Most meet it seemed to me, that their own weapons should lay low their pride and masterful mood; therefore devised I this device, and therewithal this, that thou mightest avenge thee of the shame that they have done to thee and thy kindred. Now will I that thou be true to my counsel with me, such labour as I have put forth for thine honour."

Now ride they into the home-mead of Burg unto Eyolf, the brother-in-law of those brethren. There were two harnessed horses before the door when Bardi came into the garth; and on one of them was the victual of the brethren, and were meant for provision for their journey; and that was the meaning of the new-slain flesh-meat which Bardi let bring thither erst; but Alof their sister and Kiannok, Bardi's foster-mother, had dight the same.

Now Eyolf leaps a-horseback and is all ready to ride into the home-mead from the doors. Then came out a woman and called on Bardi, and said that he should ride back to the doors, and that she had will to speak with him; and she was Alof, his sister. He bade the others ride on before, and said that he would not tarry them.

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So he cometh to the door and asketh her what she would. She biddeth him light down and come see his foster-mother. So did he, and went in. The carline was muttering up at the further end of the chamber, as she lay in her bed there. "Who goeth there now?" says she.

He answereth: "Now is Bardi here; what wilt thou with me, foster-mother?"

"Come thou hither," saith she; "welcome art thou now. Now have I slept," saith she, "but I waked through the night arraying thy victual along with thy sister. Come thou hither, and I will stroke thee over."

Bardi did according to her word, for he loved her much.

She fell to work, beginning with the crown of his head and stroked him all over right down to the toes.

Bardi said: "What feelest thou herein, and what art thou minded will be, that thou strokest me so carefully?"

She answereth: "I think well of it; nowhere meseemeth is aught in the way of a big bump, to come upon."

Bardi was a big man and stark of pith, and thick was the neck of him; she spans his neck with her hands, and taketh from her sark a big pair of beads which was hers, and winds it about his neck, and draggeth his shirt up over it.

He had a whittle at his neck in a chain, and that she let abide. Then she bade him farewell; and he rideth away now after his fellows; but she called after him, "Let it now abide so arrayed, as I have arrayed it; and meseemeth that then things will go well."

CHAPTER XXIV. Of Thorarin's Arraying.

Now when he cometh up with his fellowship, they ride their ways. Thorarin fared long on the road with them, and layeth down, how they shall go about their journey, deeming that much lay on it that they should fare well.

"A place for guesting have I gotten you," saith he, "in Nipsdale, (1) which ye shall take. The bonder whereas ye shall harbour to-night is one Nial. So it is told," said he, "that, as to other men, he is no great thane with his wealth, though he hath enough; but this I wot that he will take you in at the bidding of my word. But now is the man come hither who last night rode from Burgfirth and the south, he whom I sent south this week to wot tidings of the country-side. And this he knoweth clearly as a true tale, that Hermund Illugison will be at the market the beginning of this week with many other men of the country-side. This also ye will have heard, that those brethren, the sons of Thorgaut, have a business on their hands this summer, to wit, to mow the meadow which is called Goldmead; and now is the work well forward, so that it will be done on Wednesday of this week; so that they must needs be at home. Now I have heard that which they are wont to fall to speech of, those Gislungs, when there is any clatter or noise; then say they, 'What! Will Bardi be come?' and thereof make they much jeering and mocking for the shaming of you. Now it is also told north here, and avouched to be thoroughly true, that this have the men of the country-side agreed to, that if any tidings befall in the country such as be of men's fashioning, then shall all men be bound to ride after them, the reason thereof being that Snorri the Priest and his folk slept but a short way from the steeds after that slaying and big deed of his. And everyone who is not ready hereto shall be fined in three marks of silver, if he belong to those who have 'thingfare-pay' (2) to yield, from Havenfells to North-water, whereas there dwelleth the greatest number of the Thingmen of the Sidefolk and those of Flokis-dale. So ride ye on the Monday from Nial's, and fare leisurely and have night-harbour on the Heath" (thence gat it the name of Two-day's Heath), "and ye shall come to those two fighting-steeds which be on the Heath, as ye go south, and look to it if they be as I tell you. There is a place called the Mires on the Heath, whence the fall of water is great; and in the northern

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Mire is a water whereinto reacheth a ness, no bigger at its upper part than nine men may stand abreast thereon; and from that mere waters run northward to our country-sides; and thither would I bid you to. But another fighting-stead is there in the southern Mire, which I would not so much have you hold as the other, and it will be worse for you if you shall have to make a shift there for safeguard. There also goeth a ness into the water. Thereon may eighteen men stand abreast, and the waters fall thence from that mere south into the country.

"But ye shall come south on Wednesday to the fell-bothies whenas all men are gone from the bothies all up and down Copsedale; for all the Sidemen have mountain business there, and there hitherto have tarried. Now meseemeth that ye will come thither nigh to nones of the day. Then shall two of your company ride down into the country-side there, and along the fell, and so to the Bridge, and not come into the peopled parts till ye are south of the river. Then shall ye come to the stead called Hallward-stead, and ask the goodman for tidings, and ask after those horses which have vanished away from the North-country. Ye shall ask also of tidings from the market. Then will ye see on Goldmead, whereas ye fare down along the river, whether men be a mowing thereon, even as the rumour goes.

"Then shall ye ride up along to the ford, and let the goodman show you the way to the ford; and so ride thence up towards the Heath and on to the Heath, whence ye may look down on Goldmead whereas ye fare along the river. Now on Wednesday morning shalt thou fare down on to the bridge, whence ye may see what may be toward in the country-side; and thou shalt sunder thy company for three places, to wit, the eighteen all told; but the nineteenth shall abide behind to heed your horses, and that shall be Kollgris, and let them be ready when ye need to take to them.

"Now six men shall be up on the bridge; (3) and I shall make it clear who they shall be, and why it shall be arrayed that way. There shall be those kinsmen Thorgisl of Middleham and Arngrim, and Eric Wide-sight, and Thorliot, Yeller's fosterling, and Eyolf of Asmund's-nip; and for this reason shall they sit there, because they would be the stiffest to thee and the hardest to sway whenas ye come into the country-side, and it behoveth you not that ye lack measure and quieting now and again.

"But midway shall sit other six: the brethren Thorod and Thorgisl of Ternmere" (the sons of the brother of Bardi's father), "then the third man who came instead of Haldor; therewithal shall be the sons of thy mother's sister, Hun and Lambkar; and Eyolf, thy brother-in-law, for the sixth; they shall be somewhat more obedient to thy counsel, and not fare with suchlike fury. And for this reason shall they sit there, that they may look on the goings of men about the country-side.

"But ye six shall fare down (into the country), to wit, thou and Stein and Steingrim, thy brethren, and Olaf and Day and Thord. They will be the most obedient to thy word; yet shall ye have strength enough for those on the Mead.

"Now shall ye fare away forthright after ye have done them a scathe whereas the chase will not fail you, and less labour will they lay thereon, if there be but seen six men of you, and there will not be a great throng at your heels if so ye go on.

"Now shall ye ride away at your swiftest (4) until ye are come to the northern fighting-stead upon the Heath; because that thence all verdicts go to the north, and therein is the greatest avail to you that so things should turn out.

"And yet I misdoubt me that thou wilt not bring this about, because of the frowardness of them that follow thee.

"Now must we sunder for this while, and meet we hail hereafter."

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ENDNOTES:

- (1) The Nipsdale here mentioned need not necessarily be the name of Nial's house, but rather that of the valley in which it was situated, its name not being given. The valley is still called Nipsdale (Nupsdalr), in which two farmsteads bear the name of Nip (Nupr), distinguished by "upper" and "nether". A name Nialstead (Njalsstathir) is still given to the ruins of an old crofter-dwelling further up the valley, possibly pointing to Nial's eleventh-century habitation.
- (2) "Thingfare-pay," Thingfarar-kaup, a term signifying both the pay that everyone who attended the Althing received, and especially the tax which was imposed for this purpose, but the standard amount of which is not stated. It was levied on everyone who, free of debt, possessed, for every servant, and every person whom it was his duty to maintain, a "cowgild" (a cow's worth), or a milking cow (havfot ku), or a net, or a boat, and besides all such furniture and appointments as were necessary for the needs of the household. He who had no servants (einvirki) should pay at a double rate, i.e., at the rate of two "cow-gilds" per servant. But it was paid only by those who did not attend at the Althing, while those who did were not only exempt from it, but had their travelling expenses paid out of what the collection from non-attendants amounted to, provided they arrived on the Thursday the Thing assembled, the first day of the session. Many minute rules were prescribed relating to this tax, which was practically a property census, and on which the social status of the taxed depended. See Gragas, Finsen, .s.v. Thingfarar kaup.
- (3) "Now six men shall be up on the Bridge," but only five are mentioned, while to the second reserve of six seven are allowed, one of whom figures oddly enough as the one "who came instead of Haldor," no substitute for Haldor having been mentioned before in the story, nor having any place in it at all. The confusion here is curious. Gefn's-Odd has evidently been the sixth man of the Bridge reserve, for his name does not appear either in the middle watch or among Bardi's attacking party of six. We imagine this may have come about in the following way. In some copy of the saga Odd's name had been left out by inadvertence. A later transcriber of that copy saw the mistake first when he got into the enumeration of the second watch, and not being able to remember by name the person omitted, nor inclined to lose time in looking him up, replaced him by "the man" who, he thought, must have been secured "instead of Haldot", when he backed out of the expedition.
- (4) "Now shall ye ride away at your swiftest," The point of this whole clause is evidently that, if Bardi and his manage to cross over to the northern side of the mountain water-shed between south and north, then the verdict or jury of neighbours would have to be summoned from their own country, instead of from the country-sides of the enemy. One cannot see whether Thorarin's statement proceeds from the law-principle of "nearest" neighbourhood, or from a customary tradition that the verdict in a suit for manslaughter committed on this side of the water-shed of a Quarter should be summoned from the same, irrespective of the distance to nearest neighbours. On this latter point we are not aware that the Gragas contains any provisions.

CHAPTER XXV. Of Bardi's Two Spies.

Now comes Bardi with his flock to Nial's in the evening. Nial is standing without, and bids them all guesting as one merry with ale; that they take, let loose their horses, and sit them down on either bench. Nial is without that evening, and his wife with him, dighting victual for their guests; but his young lad was within, and made game with them.

Bardi asked the lad if he had ever a whetstone. "I wot," saith he, "of a hard–stone which my father owns, but I durst not take it."

"I will buy it of thee," saith Bardi, "and give thee a whittle therefor."

"Yea," said the lad, "why then should I not strike a bargain with thee;" and goeth and findeth the hard–stone, and giveth it to Bardi. Bardi handles it, and taketh the whittle from his neck, and therewith was somewhat shifted the pair of beads which the carline had done about his neck, whereof is told sithence.

Now they whet their weapons, and the lad thinketh he hath done them a good turn, whereas they have what they needed. So there they abide the night through, and have good cheer.

They ride their ways on the Monday in good weather, and go not hard. Bardi asks of Eric Wide–sight what wise he deemed things would go. He answereth:

"O Lime–tree, upbearer of board of the corpses,
We nineteen together have gone from the Northland;
All over the Heath have we wended together,
And our will is to nourish the bloodfowl with victual.
But, O lad of the steed that is stalled on the rollers,
The steed of the sea–rover Heite, well wot we
That fewer shall wend we our ways from the Southland.
Now the mind of the singer is bent on the battle."

Now they abide there on the Heath night–long, and on the morrow they ride into Copse, and that was about nones of the day; but when they had baited there a while, then ride two men of them down into the peopled parts, as Thorarin had bidden; they came to no homesteads and met no people, but went the mountain way all along till they came to the Bridge, and so at last to Hallward–stead, and saw doings clearly on Goldmead, and saw that there were carles on the meadow, who were mowing, all in their shirts, and it seemed to them that there would be a day's mowing yet to do, even as had been said. So they find the goodman, and fell to talk with him, and asked him of tidings, but neither he nor they had any to tell, and they asked after those horses which they had come to seek, and in search of which men had been sent so oft before. He said he wotted no whit where they were, and bade them, for all he cared, harp on this for ever and ever.

They asked what tidings there might be from the market, and what kind of a throng was there. He said he had not clearly heard what had betid there, and that he deemed it no matter either way. Then they bade him show them the way up along the river to the ford. So did he; and they parted therewith, and they went to meet their fellows and tell them how matters stood; and there they sleep the night away.

CHAPTER XXVI. Portents At Walls.

Now must somewhat be told about the men of that country who now come into our matter. Thorbiorn Brunison rose up early at Walls, and bade his house–carle rise with him. "To–day shall we fare to Thorgaut to the stithy, and there shall we smithy."

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Now that was early, just at the sun's uprising. Thorbiorn called for their breakfast, and nought is told of what of things was brought forward, but that the goodwife set a bowl on the board. Thorbiorn cried out that he was nought well served, and he drave the bowl betwixt the shoulders of her. She turned about thereat, and cried out aloud, and was shrewish of tongue, and either was hard on the other.

"Thou hast brought that before me," said he, "wherein there is nought save blood, and a wonder it is that thou seest nothing amiss therein."

Then she answereth calmly: "I brought nought before thee which thou mightest not well eat; and none the worse do I think of the wonder thou seest, whereas it betokens that thou shalt be speedily in hell. For assuredly this will be thy fetch."

He sang a stave:

"The wealth-bearing stem that for wife we are owning,
The black coif of widowhood never shall bear
For my death; though I know that the field of the necklace
All the days of my life neath the mould would be laying:
She who filleth the ale round would give for my eating
The apples of hell-orchard. Evil unheard of!
But that wealth-bearing board now will scarcely meseemeth
Have might for the bringing this evil about."

Then she springs away, and takes a cheese-loaf and casts it down before him. But she sat on the dais on the other side and wept. Then Thorbiorn sang another stave:

"Yea, he who spurs onward the steed of the drift
Of the fair-bestroked courser of sea-roving Ati,
Hath nothing of thanks for the wife that bewails him,
While yet he fares quick on the face of the earth.
For she, the fair isle of the wrist-flame, meseemeth,
Will think it o'er irksome to have, when she flitteth
The friend of the heath-prowlers under the earth,
To speed him with heavy rain over the cheek."

"Now moreover things are shifting in uncouth fashion. Meseems as if both gable-walls have fallen away from the house, and I seem to see a mighty river running through the house from the north of the Heath; and of mould it seems to me, and of nought else tastes the cheese which I am eating."

Therewith they spring up from the board, and go to their horses and leap aback, and ride out from the garth.

Then Thorbiorn took up the word: "Dreamed have I in the night," saith he.

The house-carle asked: "What dreamedst thou?"

He said: "Methought I was standing there whereas folk were not all of one mind. And I thought I had that sword which I was wont to bear in my hand, but which as now is not at home; and straightway it brake asunder when I hewed forth with it. Methought also that I sang two staves in my sleep; and both of them I remember:

"O grove of the mote of the maidens of battle,
A dream have I dreamed me, and now will I duly
Make hard and hard woven my song-tale the noble;
'Twas the white wand of shields, of the holme of the
helm-wolf,

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The buckler, there brake it asunder, so deemed I,
In the place where the blood-reeds clashed bickering
together,
At a meeting most seemly of him who is wanted
To seek out the haunts of the hanged for a gossip.

"O Balder, that heeds the dear lair of the dale-fish,
O how well it were if I then had been bearing
A wound-wand unflawed in the din of the welter,
Where light leaps the keel of the rim of the war-board;
And I with my head-bone unhurt in the battle.
If I bore but the brand that will bring unto death
Of the warriors of menfolk not few, but a many.
And e'en such might I hold it until my life's ending."

He who followed Thorbiorn learned both these staves as they rode.

Now Thorbiorn peers about him. "Yea," saith he, "at home lieth now the smithying stuff, or else it hath fallen down. Go thou back again and seek it; and if thou find it on the way, then fare thou to the stithy; but I will ride on ahead. But if thou find it not on the road, then fare thou to thy work."

So they sunder, but the house-carle found not the smithying stuff.

Now Thorbiorn rideth to Thorgaut his kinsman, to his stithy, and meeteth him before daymeal-tide; each greeted the other and asked for tidings, and neither had aught to tell the other.

Now it is said that those sons of Thorgaut rise up all of them, and go to the mowing of Goldmead, and they spake between themselves how fair-like the weather looked, and that Goldmead would be mown that same day; they go to the meadow, and doff their clothes and weapons.

Gisli went over the meadow awhile, and looked on that which they were minded to mow, and he took his stand and sang a stave.

He told of a dream of his, that him thought they were standing on Goldmead, and there came on them many wolves and dealt with them there, and great was the work there: "And methought I woke therewith, that I ran home to the stead."

Then they fall to work and mow a while.

CHAPTER XXVII. The Slaying Of Gisli.

Now has Bardi arrayed his folk in their lurking-places, as his fosterer had taught him, even as is aforesaid, and he tells them all what he had forecast in his mind.

Then they were somewhat better content therewith, and deemed that what was minded would be brought about; and they gave out that they liked this array, so to say, but they said nevertheless that to their minds the doings would be but little.

There was then a big wood on Whitewater-side, such as in those days were wide about the land here, and six of them sat down above the wood, and saw clearly what befell on Goldmead. Bardi was in the wood, and well-nigh he and the six of them within touch of them that were a-mowing. Now Bardi scans heedfully how many men were at the mowing; and he deemed that he did not clearly know whether the third man, who was white about the head, would be a woman, or whether it would be Gisli.

The Story of the Heath-Slayings ("Heitharviga Saga")

Now they went down from under the wood one after other; and it seemed first to those sons of Thorgaut as if but one man went there; and Thormod, who mowed the last in the meadow, took up the word. "There go men," said he.

"But it seemeth to me," said Gisli, "that but one man goeth there;" but they went hard, yet did not run.

"That is not so," said Ketil Brusi; "men are there, and not so few."

So they stood still, and looked thereon, and Ketil said: "Will not Bardi be there? That is not unlike him; and no man have I skill to know if yon be not he. And that wise was he arrayed last summer at the Thing."

Those brethren, Ketil and Thormod, looked on; but Gisli went on mowing and took up the word. "So speak ye," said he, "as if Bardi would be coming from out of every bush all the summer. And he has not come yet."

Bardi and his folk had portioned out the men to them beforehand, that two should fall on each one of them. Bardi and Stein were to take Ketil Brusi, who was mighty of strength; Day and Olaf were to go against Gisli; Steingrim and Thord were to go against Thormod. So now they turn on them.

Now spake Ketil: "No lie it was that Bardi is come!"

They would fain catch up their weapons, but none of them gat hold of the weapons.

Now when they see into what plight they were come, Gisli and Ketil would run for the homestead garth, and Bardi and four of his fellows followed after them; but Thormod turns down to the river, and after him went Thord and Steingrim, and chased him into the river and stoned him from the shore; he got him over the river, and came off well.

Now came those brethren to the garth, and Ketil was the swifter, and leapt over it into the mead; but whenas Gisli leapt at the garth, a turf fell therefrom, and he slipped; therewith came up Bardi, who was the swiftest of those men, and hewed at him with the sword Thorgaut's-loom, and hewed off well-nigh all the face of him.

Straightway then he turns to meet his fellows, and tells them that something of a wound had been wrought. They said that the onset was but little and unwarrior-like. But he said that things would have to be as they were. "And now shall we turn back."

Needs must he rule, though it was much against their will.

But Ketil dragged Gisli in over the garth, and cast him on his back, and they saw that he was no heavy burden to him; and he ran home to the stead.

Thorbiorn and Thorgaut were in the stithy abiding till the house-carle should come back with the smithying stuff.

Now Thorgaut spake: "Yea, there is great noise and clatter; is not Bardi come?"

Even in that nick of time came Ketil into the stithy, and said: "That found Gisli thy son, that come he is;" and he cast him dead before his feet.

Now Bardi turns to meet his fellows, and said that he was minded that now man was come to be set against man. Quoth they, that the men were nowise equal, and that little had been done though one man had been slain, and so long a way as they had fared thereto.

The Story of the Heath-Slayings ("Heitharviga Saga")

So when all the fellowship met, then said they who had been higher up in the lurking-places, that full surely they would not have fared if they had known they should thus have to leave off in this way, that no more vengeance should follow after such a grief as had been done them, and they said that Gisli and Hall were men nowise equal. And they laid blame on Bardi, and said that they were minded to think that more would have been done if they had stood anear. Then they went to their horses, and said that they would have breakfast. Bardi bade them have no heed of breakfast, but they said that they had no will to fast. "And we know not how to think whatwise thou wouldst have come away if thou hadst done that wherein was some boldness."

Bardi said that he heeded not what they said. So they had their meat.

CHAPTER XXVIII. The Call For The Chase.

Now Thorgaut and Thorbiorn and Ketil, they talk together at home there. Thorgaut says that great is the hap befallen; "and the blow has lighted nigh to me; yet meseemeth that no less may be looked for yet, and I will that there be no tiding after them."

They say both that that shall never be. The women heard what had been said, and Ketil sends them out to Frodistead and Side-mull to tell the tidings; and then might each tell the other thence-forth, till the word should come into Thwartwater-lithe, and over Northwater-dale, for men to ride after them who have wrought this deed, and so put off from them forfeits and fines.

They fare then, and take their horses and ride to Highfell to see Arni Thorgautson; he there might welcome men allied to him, for thither was come Thorarin of Thwartwater-lithe, the father of Astrid his wife: thence ride they five together.

Now it is to be told of Thormod that he fared up along south of the river till he came to the Ridge. In that time south of the river was scantily housed. There were but few folk at home there, for the men were gone to Whitewater-meads, and the house-carles were at work. Eid was sitting at the chess, and his sons with him, the one hight Illugi, the other Eystein. Thormod tells him of the tidings that have befallen. There was, in those days and long after, a bridge over the river beside Biarnisforce. Eid nowise urged the journey, but his two sons grip their weapons and take to the way. The brethren go to Thorgisl of Hewerstead, and by then was come home Eyolf his son, who had come out to Iceland that same summer.

Thormod fares up to Hallkeldstead, and comes thither and tells the tidings. Tind was the one carle at home there; but men were come thither to the stithy.

A woman dwelt next thereto who hight Thorfinna, and was called the Skald-woman; she dwelt at Thorwardstead. She had a son hight Eyolf, and a brother who hight Tanni, and was called the Handstrong, for his might was unlike the sons of men; and of like kind was Eyolf, his sister's son; full-hearted in daring they were moreover. These had come to Tind for the smithying. But for that cause folk came not to Gilsbank, that Hermund was ridden to the ship and his house-carles with him.

Tind and the others were four, and Thormod the fifth, and it was now late in the day.

The sons of Eld came to Thorgisl the Hewer, and the folk there bestir them speedily, and fare thence six in company. Eyolf, the son of Thorgisl, fared with him and four others.

CHAPTER XXIX. The Chasing Of Bardi.

Now must it be told what tidings Bardi and his folk see. He rideth the first of them, and somewhat the hardest, so that a gate's space was betwixt him and them; but they rode after him somewhat leisurely, and said that he was wondrous fearful.

Now see they the faring of men who chase them, and that flock was not much less than they themselves had. Then were Bardi's fellows glad, and thought it good that there would be a chance of some tale to tell of their journey.

Then spake Bardi: "Fare we away yet a while, for it is not to be looked for that they will spur on the chase any the less."

Then sang Eric Wide-sight a stave:

"Now gather together the warriors renowned,
Each one of them eager-fain after the fray.
Now draweth together a folk that is fight-famed,
Apace on the heathways from out of the Southland;
But Bardi in nowise hard-counselled is bidding
The warriors fare fast and be eager in fleeing
The blast of the spear-storm that hitherward setteth,
The storm of the feeders of fight from the South."

"Now sayest thou not sooth," said Bardi; "that spake I, that each should fare as he might, till we be come to the fighting-stead in the northernmost mire, which my fosterer told me we should make the most of."

Nevertheless, Bardi could not get that matter brought on the road, and they said that they had been chased enow when they came to the fight-stead in the southern mire; and Bardi sees that so it will have to be; so now he turneth to meet his folk. He says that he was no eagerer to ride away than they, "and this plot of yours shall ye pay for, whereas I may not let you now, that we shall not run this evening before ye think it high time; and ye, or anyone else, shall first speak the word of not abiding, or ever I do."

Now deem they right well thereover. They left their horses out on the ness away from them, and set Kollgris to heed them; for he was no fighting-man, and was on the downhill road of life.

Now sang Eric a stave:

"Fast hold we the field now, let each man be moving
Forth on to the battle that bideth us here.
Let us the fell reddeners, the well-proven falcons,
The shield-tearers, sniff in the wounds of the men.
I know how to bide in my place of the battle,
Though harder and harder the sword-storm be growing
That gathereth against us from fields of the South.
Here up on the Heath let us harden the helm-rod."

That same day withal folk went to Whitewatermeads to fetch Hermund, who was wending home again, and the messengers met him up from Thingness. There he leaveth behind all his train, and biddeth every man fare with him who might get away, and calleth all folk out, and rideth after them.

CHAPTER XXX. The First Brunt Of Battle On The Heath.

Now they come face to face, Bardi and the Southern men, who now got off their horses. Bardi's folk had arrayed them athwart the ness. "Go none of you forth beyond these steps," says Bardi, "because I misdoubt me that more men are to be looked for."

The breadth of the ness went with the rank of the eighteen of them, and there was but one way of falling on them. Says Bardi: "It is most like that ye will get the trying of weapons; but better had it been to hold the northernmost fight-stead, nor had any blame been laid upon us if we had so done; and better had it been for the blood-feuds. Yet shall we not be afraid, even though we are here."

There stood they with brandished weapons. On the one hand of Bardi stood Thorberg, and on the other side Gefn's-Odd, and on the other hand of them the brethren of Bardi.

Now those Southern men, they fall not on so speedily as the others looked for, for more folk had they to face than they had wotted of. The leaders of them were Thorgaut, Thorbiorn, and Ketil. Spake Thorgaut: "Wiser it were to bide more folk of ours; much deeper in counsel have they proved, inasmuch as they came but few of them within the country-side."

Now they fall not on; and when the Northern men see that, they take to their own devices. Saith Thorberg: "Is Brusi amidst the folk perchance?" He said that he was there.

Says Thorberg: "Knowest thou perchance this sword, which here I hold?" He said that he knew not how that should be looked for. "Or who art thou?"

"Thorberg I hight," says he; "and this sword Lyng-Torfi, thy kinsman, gave to me; thereof shalt thou abide many a stroke to-day, if it be as I will. But why fall ye not on, so boldly as ye have followed on to-day, as it seemeth to me, now running, and now riding."

He answereth: "Maybe that is a sword I own; but before we part to-day thou shalt have little need to taunt us."

Then said Thorberg: "If thou art a man full-fashioned for fight, why wilt thou tarry for more odds against us?"

Then Bardi took up the word: "What are the tidings of the country-side?"

Said Ketil: "Tidings are such as shall seem good to thee, to wit, the slaying of Gisli, my brother."

Saith Bardi: "We blame it nowise; and I deemed not that my work had been done anywise doubtfully. Come! Deemest thou, Ketil, that thou and thy father have nought at all wherefor to avenge you on us. I mind me that it was but a little since thou camest home, Ketil, bearing a back burden, a gift in hand for thy father. Now if thou bearest it not in mind, here is there a token thereof, this same sword, to wit, not yet dry of the brains of him."

And he shaketh the sword at him therewith.

This they might not abide, so now they run on them. Thorbiorn leaps at Bardi, and smites him on the neck, and wondrous great was the clatter of the stroke, and it fell on that stone of the beads which had been shifted whenas he took the knife and gave it to Nial's son; and the stone brake asunder, and blood was drawn on either side of the band, but the sword did not bite.

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Then said Thorbiorn: "Troll! No iron will bite on thee."

Now were they joined in battle together, and after that great stroke he (Thorbiorn) turns him forthwith to meet Thorod, and they fall to fight together; Ketil goeth against Bardi, and Thorgaut against Thorberg. There lacked not great strokes and eggings-on.

The Southlanders had the lesser folk, and the less trusty.

Now first is to be told of the dealings betwixt Bardi and Ketil. Ketil was the strongest of men and of great heart. Long they had to do together, till it came to this, that Bardi slashed into the side of him, and Ketil fell. (A) Then leapt Bardi unto Thorgaut and gave him his death-wound, (B) and there they both lay low before the very weapon which they owned themselves.

Now is it to be told of Thorbiorn and Thorod. They fall to in another place; and there lacked not for great strokes, which neither spared to the other, most of them being huge in sooth. But one stroke Thorod fetched at Thorbiorn, and smote off his foot at the ankle-joint; but none the less he fought on, and thrust forth his sword into Thorod's belly, so that he fell, and his gut burst out.

But Thorbiorn, seeing how it had fared with his kinsmen (namely, Ketil and Thorgaut), he heeded nought of his life amidst these maimings.

Now turn the sons of Gudbrand on Thorbiorn. He said: "Seek ye another occasion; erst it was not for young men to strive with us." Therewith he leaps at Bardi and fights with him. Then said Bardi: "What! A very troll I deem thee, whereas thou tightest with one foot off. Truer of thee is that which thou spakest to me."

"Nay," quoth Thorbiorn, "nought of trollship is it for a man to bear his wounds, and not to be so soft as to forbear warding him whiles he may. That may be accounted for manliness rather; and so shouldst thou account it, and betroll men not, whereas thou art called a true man. But this shall ye have to say hereof before I bow me in the grass, that I had the heart to make the most of weapons."

There fell he before Bardi and won a good word. (C)

Now lacks there never onset, but it came to this at last, that the Southern men gave way.

But it is told that there was a man hight Thorliot, a great champion, who had his abode at Walls; but some say that he was of Sleybrook: he fought with Eric Wide-sight; and before they fought, Eric sang this stave:

"O warrior that reddenest the war-brand thin-whetted,
'Tis the mind of us twain to make shields meet together
In the wrath of the war-fray. O bider of Wall-stead,
Now bear we no ruth into onset of battle.
O hider of hoards of the fire that abideth
In the fetter of earth, I have heard of thine heart,
High-holden, bepraised amongst men for its stoutness;
And now is the time that we try it together."

They had to do a long while, and that say men that scarce might braver men be seen; for either of them was of the biggest and strongest of men, deft in weapons, and dauntless of heart. Now Eric hews at Thorliot with his sword, and it brake asunder, but he catches a hold of the point and hews at him, and gives him a great wound, and he fell. (D)

CHAPTER XXXI. The Second Brunt Of Battle And The Third.

Now is there somewhat of a lull; but therewith were seen six men a-riding; there were Thorgisl the Hewer, and Eyolf his son, and the sons of Eid. They see the evil plight of their folk, and that their lot was sinking much, and they were ill content therewith.

Now the sons of Gudbrand were ware that there was Eyolf, and they crave leave of Bardi to take his life and avenge them. For it had befallen, that whenas they were east-away he had thrust them from a certain gallery down into a muck-pit, and therein they had fared shamefully; so they would now avenge them; and they had made this journey with Bardi from the beginning that they might get the man.

Said Bardi: "Ye are doughty men, and of much worth, and much teen it were if ye were cast away. Still, I will see to it that your will have its way; but I will bid you go not from out the ranks." But they might not withhold themselves, and they run off to meet him eagerly, and they fall to fight. Eyolf was the greatest of champions, and a man of showy ways, like his father before him; full-fashioned of might, well proven in onslaught; and the battle betwixt them was long and hard; and suchwise it ended, that either was so wilful and eager, and so mighty of heart and hand, that they all lay dead at their parting. (E)

Fast fought the sons of Eid withal, and go forward well and warrior-like; against them fought Stein and Steingrim, and now they all fight and do a good stroke of work; and there fall the sons of Eid, (F) and Bardi was standing hard by, when they lost their lives.

Thorgisl the Hewer spared nought; he deemed great scathe wrought him by the death of his son. He was the mightiest man of his hands, and defter of weapons than other men. He heweth on either hand and deemeth life no better than death.

These are most named amongst the foremost herein, to wit, Thorgisl and Eric and Thorod.

Thorgisl spared him nought, and there was no man of the country who seemed to all a wayfellow of more avail than he. Thorgisl (son of Hermund, brother of Thorod) betook him to meet him; and they dealt long together, nor was either of them lacking in hardihood. Now Thorgisl (Hermundson) smites a stroke on him down his nose from the brow, and said:

"Now hast thou gotten a good mark befitting thee; and even such should more of you have."

Then spake Thorgisl (the Hewer): "Nought good is the mark; yet most like it is, that I shall have the heart to bear it manfully; little have ye yet to brag over." And he smote at him so that he fell and is now unfightworthy. (1) (G)

Now was there a lull for a while, and men bind their wounds.

Now is seen the riding of four men, and there was Tind and Tanni, Eyolf and Thormod; and when they came up they egg on much; and they themselves were of championship exceeding great; and battle was joined the third time.

Tanni fell on against Bardi, and there befell fight of wondrous daring.

Tanni hewed at him, and it fell out as before, that Bardi is hard to deal with, and the business betwixt them ended herewith, that Tanni fell before Bardi. (H)

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Eyolf went against Odd, and they fight, each of them the best of stout men. Now Eyolf smiteth at Odd, and it came on to his cheek and on to his mouth, and a great wound was that.

Then spake Eyolf: "Maybe the widow will think the kissing of thee worsened."

Odd answereth: "Long hath it been not over good, and now must it be much spoilt forsooth; yet it may be that thou wilt not tell thereof to thy sweetheart."

And he smote at him, so that he gat a great wound. (I)

Here it befell as of the rest, that Bardi was standing hard by, and did him scathe.

Withal Thormod Thorgautson was a bold man, and went well forward. Eyolf of Burg fared against him, and got a sore hurt.

Now though these above said be the most named amongst the Northlanders, yet all of them fared forth well and in manly wise, whereas they had a chosen company.

So when these were fallen there was a lull in the battle. And now Thorberg spake that they should seek to get away; but eight men from the South were fallen, and three from the North. (2) Now Bardi asks Thorod if he thought he would have the might to fare with them, and he gave out there was no hope thereof, and bids them ride off.

Now Bardi beheld his hurt, and therewithal they saw the band that now fared up from the South like a wood to look upon. So Bardi asks if they be minded to bide, but they said they would ride off; and so they did, and were now sixteen in company, and the more part of them wounded.

ENDNOTES:

- (1) "And he smote at him so that he fell and is now unfightworthy." The first "he" is Thorgisl, son of Hermund Solmundson, Bardi's first cousin, the following "him" and "he" is Thorgisl Hewer, whose wound proved fatal, he being one of the "eight from the South" who fell in the Heath-fight, Chapter XXXI, and was left unatoned by the award at the Althing, Chapter XXXV.
- (2) "But eight men from the South were fallen and three from the North." Here our author shows himself signally out of his bearings. The very description of the battle shows that ten from the South fell in this fight, which record taken page by page falls out as follows (NOTE: I have taken the liberty of marking the deaths in the text with a letter -- DBK):

A) Chapter XXX. "Ketil" (son of Thorgaut) "fell".....1 B) Chapter XXX. "Then leapt Bardi unto Thorgaut and gave him his death-wound".....2 C) Chapter XXX. Thorbiorn Brunison, after fighting with Thorod and the sons of Gudbrand, "fell before Bardi".....3 D) Chapter XXX. Thorliot of Walls or "Sley-brook" fights with Eric Wide-sight, who "gives him a great wound, and he fell".....4 E) Chapter XXXI. Eyolf, son of Thorgisl Hewer, fights with the sons of Gudbrand, and "they all lay dead at their parting".....5 F) Chapter XXXI. "There fall the sons of Eid," Illugi and Eystein.....6,7 G) Chapter XXXI. "And he" (Thorgisl, son of Hermund) "smote at him (Thorgisl Hewer) "so that he fell and is now unfightworthy;" that he was killed, Chapter XXXV, proves...8 H) Chapter XXXI. "Tanni fell before Bardi".....9 I) Chapter XXXI. Eyolf, son of Thorfinna, fights with Gefn's-Odd and "gat a great wound", and Bardi "did him scathe" = gave him his quietus.....10 J) To these comes Gisli.....11 The total loss on

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the part of the Northerners, including Hall, was four. In setting forth the were-gild adjustment at the Thing, Chapter XXXV, our author states: A. That Southerners were paired against Northerners: (6) 1. Illugi {sons of 1. Hun {sons of (7) 2. Eystein Eid} = 2. Lambkar Gudbrand} (3) 3. Thorbiorn Brunison = 3. Thorod, son of Hermund (1) 4. Ketil {sons of 4. Hall, son of (11) 5. Gisli Thorgauf} = Gudmund. B. That there were left unatoned: (8) 6. Thorgisl Hower, (5) 7. Eyolf, his son, (9) 8. Tanni the Handstrong, (10) 9. Eyolf, Thorfinna's son. But he leaves out of the account altogether (2) 10. Thorgaut (1) and (4) 11. Thorliot. In the verses attributed to Eric Wide-sight, Chapter XXXVIII, he says in the first that eleven, in the second nine fell from the South. This cannot be the genuine testimony of one and the same eye-witness. The first statement is evidently correct, as it agrees with the facts of the saga; the second spurious, dating from the time when the present miscalculation had crept into the saga.

CHAPTER XXXII. Bardi Puts Away His Wife.

Now it is to be told of Illugi that he cometh upon the field of deed, and seeth there things unlooked for, and great withal. Then sang Tind a song when Illugi asked how many they had been:

"The stem of the battle-craft here was upbearing
His spear-shaft with eight and with ten of the ash-trees
That bear about ever the moon of the ocean;
With us five less than thirty men were they a-fighting.
But nine of the flingers of hail of the bow,
Yea, nine of our folk unto field there have fallen,
And surely meseemeth that dead they are lying,
Those staves of the flame by the lathe that is fashioned.

"Of the North the two cravers of heirship from Eid
In the field are they fallen as seen is full clearly,
And Gudbrand's two sons they fell there moreover,
Where the din of the spear-play was mighty mid men.
But never henceforward for boot are we bidding;
Unless as time weareth the vengeance befall.
Now shall true folk be holding a mind of these matters,
As of sword-motes the greatest ere fought amongst men."

[Here a page in the old record is so obscure, as to leave readable only bits here and there, from which one gleans so much as that someone of Illugi's company saw where Thorod lay wounded, yet still alive, and forthwith went up to him and smote off his head. When Illugi was aware of this, he said he had had but an evil errand thither in slaying the man. Then Illugi with a band of one hundred men gives chase to Bardi and his folk. But he is overtaken by a sudden darkness, and bids his folk return, and brings to the South the bodies of the fallen. Many were wounded of the men of the South: those Gislungs Arni Frodi, Thormod, and Thorarin very sorely. In hope of entrapping the Northerners if they should return to fetch their dead, Illugi left a band of men to watch the bodies, who rigged up a tent for themselves, and kept guard there for a while. Bardi went with his company first to Nial, and thence to his foster-father, Thorarin of Lechmote, and tells him privily the news of his journey, giving out that he was minded now to go fetch the bodies of the fallen. But Thorarin counselled him to wait a while, for he guessed that the Southerners would tire of the watch. And even as he guessed so the matter befell, that they wearied of the watch upon the bleak mountain, and returned to their homes.

Next the story has told how Bardi sought aid from friends and neighbours in household needs, that he might maintain a bodyguard at Asbiorn's-ness against the Southerners gathering men to beset him in his house. In this matter his wife Gudrun sought to prevail with her father to come bounteously to Bardi's aid, but he hung back, and the unbroken tale begins again when Bardi has gone himself to his father-in-law to urge the matter.] "Biorn," says he, "how much wilt thou add to my store of slaughtered meat, if I eke my household in some way?"

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Spake Thorbiorn: "Nought will I add thereto, because nought is due from me." So other folk busied themselves about the matter with Biorn, but could get nothing good out of him.

Bardi said: "Then neither will have aught good of the matter, and they will have to pay on whom the worsere lot falleth; but I shall do that whereby thou shalt be most dishonoured." And therewithal Bardi nameth witnesses, and gives forth that he putteth from him Gudrun, Biorn's daughter "and for this cause," says Bardi, "that thou art by a great deal too much of a miser for any doughty man to put up with having thee for a father-in-law; nor shalt thou ever have back from me either dower or jointure."

CHAPTER XXXIII. The Speaking Out Of Truce.

Now they hear a great din, in that many men ride to the river. Here was come Thorgisl Arason, having journeyed from the North-country from his bridal; in his company was Snorri the Priest, and eighty men together they rode.

Then said Bardi: "Let us drop our visors, (1) and ride we into their band, but never more than one at a time, and then they will find out nothing, seeing that it is dark."

So Bardi rideth up to Snorri the Priest, having a mask over his face, and hath talk with him while they cross the ford, and tells him the tidings. And as they ride out of the river Snorri the Priest took up the word, and said:

"Here let us bait, Thorgisl, and tarry and talk together, before we betake ourselves to quarters for the night." Bardi and his were riding beside the company, and folk heeded it not. Thorgisl was minded in the evening for Broadlirstead.

Now when they had sat down, spake Snorri: "I am told, Thorgisl," says he, "that no man can set forth as well as thou the speech of truce and other in law matters." (2)

"That is a tale that goeth not for much," says Thorgisl.

"Nay," says Snorri, "there must be much therein, since all men speak in one way thereof."

Thorgisl answers: "Truly there is nothing in it that I deliver the speech of truce better than other men, though it may be good in law notwithstanding."

Says Snorri: "I would that thou wouldst let me hear it."

He answers: "What need is there thereof? Are any men here at enmity together?"

He said he knew nought thereof, "but this can never be a misdoing; so do as I will."

So Thorgisl said it should be so, and therewithal he fell to speaking:

"This is the beginning of our speech of truce, that God may be at peace with us all; so also shall we be men at peace between ourselves and of good accord, at ale and at eating, at meets and at man-motes, at church-goings and in king's house; and wherever the meetings of men befall, we shall be so at one as if enmity had never been between us. Knife we shall share and shorn meat, yea, and all other things between us, even as friends and not foes. Should henceforth any trespass happen amongst us, let boot be done, but no blade be reddened. But he of us who tramples on truce settled, or fights after full troth given, he shall be so far wolf-driven and chased, as men furthest follow up wolves, Christian men churches seek, heathen men

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their temples tend, fires flare up, earth grows green, son names a mother's name, ships sail, shields glitter, sun shines, snow wanes, Fin skates, fir groweth, a falcon flieth the springlong day with wind abaft under both his wings standing, as heaven dwindles, the world is peopled, wind waxeth, water sheds to sea, and carles sow corn.

"He shall shun churches and Christian men, God's houses and men's, and every home but hell.

"Each one of us taketh troth from the other for himself and his heirs born and unborn, begotten and not begotten, named and not named, and each one giveth in turn troth, life troth, dear troth, yea, main troth, such as ever shall hold good while mold and men be alive.

"Now are we at one, and at peace wheresoever we meet on land or on water, on ship or on snowshoe, on high seas or horseback:

"Oars to share,
Or bailing-butts,
Thoft or thole plank
If that be needful."

So at one with one another, as a son with his father, or father with son, in all dealings together. Let us now give hands to the speech of truce, and hold we well to our truce even as Christ wills it, witness thereto all those men who now have hearkened the speech of truce. Let him have the grace of God who holdeth the truce, but him have God's grame who riveth rightful truce. Hail us that we are appeased, but God be at peace with all."

ENDNOTES:

- (1) "Let us drop our visors" --- tokum ofan bunat yarn. Our rendering is borne out by the statement in the next paragraph, that Bardi had "a mask over his face" --- hefir grimu a hofthi ser. The passage has been overlooked by lexicographers.
- (2) "Spake Snorri: 'I am told, Thorgisl, that no man can set forth as well as thou the speech of truce.'" The real secret of Snorri's anxiety to get Thorgisl to bind himself unwittingly to peace with Bardi, and thereby dissociating himself from his enemies, was clearly this, that he had but lately been Halkel of Halkelstead's son-in-law, and brother-in-law to Illugi the Black and Tind, Snorri's pronounced enemies since the slaying of Stir, whom he thus deprived of an important ally.

CHAPTER XXXIV. Snorri Tells The Whole Tale.

And when Thorgisl had done giving out the words of truce, Snorri spoke: "Have thanks, friend; right well hast thou spoken, and it is clear enough that he who trespasseth there against is truly a truce-breaker, most especially if he be here present." And now Snorri tells the tidings which had befallen, and also this, that Bardi and his men had come into the band of Thorgisl and those with him.

In that band there were many friends and close kindred of the men of the South; moreover, Thorgisl had aforetime had for wife Grima, the daughter of Halkel, and sister of Illugi the Black.

Then said Thorgisl: "For this once we might well have done without thee, Snorri."

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He answers: "Say not so, good friend; troubles between men have now grown full great, though here they be stayed."

So now Thorgisl would not go against the truce which he himself had bespoken, and so folk parted asunder.

Snorri rode away with a company of twenty men to Lechmote, and Bardi and his folk were with him, and Thorarin received them well, and cheery of mood they were and bespoke their counsels.

[Here a lacuna of one leaf in the old MS. interrupts the story, which begins again when, apparently at the Althing, the affairs of Bardi were settled at law.]

CHAPTER XXXV. Bardi's Affairs Settled.

Then stands up an old man, Eid Skeggison to wit, and said: "We like it ill that men should bandy words about here, whether it be done by our men or others; to nought good will that come, while often evil proceedeth therefrom. It behoveth men here to speak what may tend to peace. I am minded to think that not another man among us has more to miss, nor that on any, much greater grief hath been brought than on me; yet a wise counsel do I deem it to come to peace, and therefore I shall have no ruth on anyone bandying words about here. Moreover, it is most likely now, as ever, that it will only come to evil if folk will be casting words of shame at each other."

He got good cheer for his speech. And now men search about for such as be likeliest for the peacemaking. Snorri is most chiefly spoken of as seeking to bring about the peace. He was then far sunk in age. Another such was Thorgisl, the friend of Snorri, for their wives were sisters. Now both sides did it to wit that matters should be put to award, and the pairing of man to man; though erst folk had been sore of their kinsmen.

Now we know no more to tell thereof than that the fallen were paired man to man, and for the award Snorri was chosen on behalf of Bardi, together with Gudmund, the son of Eyolf, while Thorgisl, the son of Ari, and Il lugi, were appointed on behalf of the Southerners. (1) So they fell to talking over the matter between them, as to what would most likely lead to peace. And it seemed good to them to pair men together in this wise:

The sons of Eid and the sons of Gudbrand were evened, as was also Thorod, the son of Hermund, and Thorbiorn. But now as to Hall Gudmundson, the Burgfirthers thought the mangild for him was pushed too far, so they drew off, and broke the peace; yet they knew that Bardi had set his heart on that matter. But of the close thereof this is to be told, that the sons of Thorgaut, Ketil and Gisli, were paired against Hall Gudmundson. In all there were nine lives lost of the Southerners, and now four from the North have been set off against five Gislungs; for nought else would like the kinsmen of Bardi because of the disparity of kin there was.

Then matters were talked over with both sides as to what next was most like to do. There were now four Southernmen unatoned, Thorgisl to wit, and Eyolf his son, Tanni the Handstrong, and Eyolf, his sister's son.

Now Bardi declared that he was no man of wealth any more than his brothers or their kindred, "nor do we mean to claim money in atonement on our side."

Answered Snorri: "Yet it behoveth not, that neither fine nor outlawry come about." Bardi said he would not gainsay that people should go abroad, so that they were free to come back again, nor that then all the more of them should fare. "Yet one there is who cannot fare; for him let fee be yolden, though it may hap that ye deem ye have some guilt to square with him. My fellow Gris will not be found to be bitten by guilt." Hesthofdi, who now dwells at the place called Stead in Skagafirth, who was a kinsman of his, took him in.

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So matters came about, that on this they made peace, as they were most willing to agree to men faring abroad. Now this was deemed to be about the only boot to be got, since Bardi might not bite at–fines; they hoped, too, that thereby unpeace would somewhat abate, and on the other hand they deemed no less honour done to themselves by their having to be abroad. By wise men it was deemed most like to allay their rage, so great as it was, if for a while they should not be living within one and the same land.

Fourteen of the men who had had share in the Heath–slaughters were to fare abroad, and be abroad for three winters, and be free to come back in the third summer, but no money should be found for their faring.

Thus were men appeased on these matters without taking them into court. And so it was accounted that Bardi and those who came forth for his avail had had the fuller share, for as hopeless as it had seemed for a while.

ENDNOTES:

- (1) "Thorgisl, the son of Ari, and Illugi, were appointed on behalf of the Southerners." There is an evident confusion in the story as to what part Illugi and his son Hermund respectively took in the affairs relating to Bardi. When the chase for Bardi was called, we read (Chapter XXIX): "But for that cause folk came not to Gilsbank, that Hermund was ridden to the ship." Again (Chapter XXIX): "That same day withal folk went to Whitewater–meads to fetch Hermund, who was wending home again, and the messengers met him up from Thingness. There he leaveth behind all his train, and biddeth every man fare with him who might get away.... and rideth after them." Next (Chapter XXXI) Hermund's part is foisted on Illugi: "Now it is to be told of Illugi that he cometh upon the field of deed," Evidently we ought to read "Hermund" here. For Illugi could not be a party to a hostile pursuit of Bardi with intent to slay him, and yet sit as a judge in his case at the Althing.

CHAPTER XXXVI. Bardi Fares And Is Shipwrecked.

Now Bardi sends men into the country–side. He and his had got rid of their land and stock in case this should be the end of the matter; the which they could not surely tell beforehand. The messenger was hight Thorod, and was by–named Kegward, not beloved of folk; he was to have three winters; he was akin to the sons of Gudround, wealthy in chattels withal. And now the purchase of their lands as aforesaid was all but settled.

Now there cometh withal a ship from the high seas into the mouth of Blanda, which was the keel of Haldor, Bardi's foster–brother.

Therewithal folk came back from the Thing, and when Haldor hears that Bardi must needs go abroad, he has the freight of the craft unshipped, and brings himself, ship and all, up into the Hope over against Bardi's house, and a joyful meeting was theirs.

"Kinsman," says Haldor, "ever hast thou handled matters well as concerning me; thou hast often been bounteous to me, nor didst thou wax wrath on me when I did not go with thee on that journey of thine, so therefore I will now promise thee some avail in return, as now thou shalt hear: this ship will I give thee with yard and gear."

Bardi thanked him, saying he deemed he had done the deed of a great man. So now he dights this craft, and has with him five– and–twenty men. Somewhat late they were bound for sea; then put off to the main, and are eleven days out at sea; but in such wise their faring befell that they wreck their ship against Sigluness in the north, and goods were lost, but the men saved.

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Gudmund the Elder had ridden out to Galmastrand, and heareth the tidings and hasteneth homeward. And in the evening spake Eyolf, his son: "Maybe it is Bardi yonder on the other side, that we see from here." Many said it was not unlike.

"Now how wouldst thou go about it?" says Eyolf, even he, "if it should hap that he had been driven back here?" (1)

He answers: "What seemeth good to thee?"

He answers: "To bid them all home here to guesting. Meet were that."

Gudmund answers: "Large of mind thou, nor wot I if that be altogether so ill counselled."

Answers Eyolf, even he: "Speak thou, hailest of men! Now I can tell thee that Bardi, he and his, have been driven back, and broken to splinters against Sigluness, and have lost the best part of their goods. From this thou wilt have honour."

So he closed his mouth; but Gudmund thought he liked the matter none the better for that, yet lets him have his will.

ENDNOTES:

- (1) "Maybe it is Bardi yonder on the other side that we see from here" — "vera ma nu, at Barthi se fyrir handan, er hethan of ser." These words must be supposed to have been spoken at Gudmund's house of Maddervales, situate some distance up the valley that runs inland up from the bottom of Eyiafirth. But that is a long way from Galmastrand, no neighbouring point of it even being in view from Maddervales. It seems almost as if the writer imagined that this strand was on the eastern instead of western side of the firth, and so near to the bottom of it that it could be seen from the valley itself, for only the innermost part of Eyiafirth could be seen from Gudmund's house. Moreover, this is said to have happened at night, and now it was autumn, and evenings drawing in fast, so that nothing could be seen at all, for we know from the saga already that Bardi was late bound for sea. Maybe the statement is due to someone who thought that Gudmund dwelt at Maddervales in Horgriverdale. That house indeed is situate on the upmost or innermost border of Galmastrand, but in such a manner that there is no view from it at all open towards this littoral tract. The whole passage must be spurious.

CHAPTER XXXVII. Bardi's Abiding With Gudmund.

So Eyolf dights him for the journey, and goes with five—and— twenty horses to meet them, and happens on them on Galmastrand. He greets them well, and bids them go home with him, by the will of his father.

They did so, and there they had to themselves the second bench throughout the winter; and Gudmund was cheery to them, and did to them after the fashion of a great man and well. And that was widely rumoured.

Einar, the son of Jarnskeggi, often bids them go to his house and stay with him. And thus now they are right happy.

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Now we have to bring to mind, that it was Thorarin's rede that with Bardi there were men who were of great worth and had much to fall back upon. And they now sent to the west for their moneys, being still bent on faring abroad in the summer.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. Eric's Song On The Heathslayings.

Some time that winter it befell that there was one who asked Eric the Skald as to what had befallen, and how many lives had been lost. He sang:

"Famed groves of the race-course whereon the sword runneth,
All up on the Heath 'twas eleven lay dead
In the place where the lime-board, the red board of battle,
Went shivering to pieces midst din of the shields.
And thereof was the cause of the battle, that erewhile
It was Gisli fell in with his fate and his ending
In the midst of the fray of the fire of the fight:
'Gainst the wielder of wound-shaft we thrust forth the
onslaught."

And still here is a witness that at this time the asking had been put forth as to how many had fallen of each:

"Three stems of the stall whereon lieth the serpent,
It was even so many that fell of our men,
And the full tale of them that came out of the Northland;
The fish of the fight-board in wounds have we reddened.
But nine is the number of those that have fallen
Of the tholes of the fire of the witch-song of Fiolnir,
From out of the Southland, that fell on the Heath,
Befell to the men there grim gale of the battle."

Then people fell a-talking, saying that greatly had the weight of the slaughter fallen into the band of the Southmen. Then sang he a song:

It was Stir the swift-speeding, and Snorri moreover,
Who summoned the sword-mote, and let it be holden,
Whereas they, the Gods of the spear of the battle,
Made a fate over-heavy for the kindred of Gisli.
But yet little less was the shard of the kindred
That afterwards Bardi carved out with his weapon
From the men of the Southland, the feeders of fight;
For the fight-folk of Gisli there fell beyond measure."

CHAPTER XXXIX. Bardi Goeth To Norway And Afterwards To Iceland Again.

Now Bardi's fellows took their money and made them ready for faring abroad with a goodly deal of wealth.

Bardi and his brethren sent a word to say that they will have their lands to sell them, for they deem that they are in need of chattels. But he (Thorolf Kegward) (1) would not give up the land, and claims that the bargain should stand even as it was erst purposed. So that now they must either forego their money or slay him.

Now Eyolf (Gudmundson) says he will hand over to them as much money as the land is worth, and that he will himself see to further dealings with Eyolf of Burg, (2) and declareth that that summer he shall have him either killed or driven out of the lands, and made himself the owner thereof.

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Now Bardi buys a ship which stood up in Housewick; and then he went abroad, and Eyolf saw them off with all honour, and now, this time, they fared well, and Bardi cometh up from the main north in Thrandheim-bay into the Cheaping, and has his ship drawn up and well done to withal.

At that time King Olaf the Holy ruled over Norway, and was now at the cheaping-stead. Bardi and his fellows went before the king, and they greeted the king well, even as beseemed, "and this is the way with us, lord," says Bardi, "that we would fain be of thy winter-guests."

The king answers in this way: "We have had news of thee, Bardi," says he, "that thou art a man of great kin, a mighty man of thine hands; moreover, that ye are doughty men, that ye have fallen in with certain great deeds, and have wreaked your wrongs, yet waited long before so doing. Howbeit ye have still some ancient ways about you, and such manner of faith as goeth utterly against my mind. Now for the reason that I have clean parted from such things, our will is not to take you in; yet shall I be thy friend, Bardi," says he, "for methinks that some great things may be in store for thee. But it may often befall to those who fall in with suchlike matters, should they grow to be over-weighty to deal with, then if there be certain ancient lore blended therewith, therein are men given to trow overmuch."

Then spake Bardi: "No man there is," says he, "whom I would rather have for a friend than thee, and thanks we owe thee for thy words."

Now that winter long Bardi had his abode in the town, and all men held him of good account. But the next spring he dights his ship for Denmark, and there he was for another winter, and was well beholden withal, though tidings be not told thereof.

Thereafter he dights his ship for Iceland, and they came out upon the north of the land, and were in great straits for money.

By this time Gudmund was dead, and Eyolf came to see them and bid them come to his house, and anon each went to his own, all being now guiltless.

Eyolf gave up to Bardi and his brethren their lands inherited from their father, showing forth again his large-heartedness as before, nor was any other man such avail to them as he was.

Now Bardi betook himself to Gudbrand his brother-in-law, a wealthy man and of high kin withal, but said to be somewhat close-fisted.

But the brethren of Bardi went to Burg, the southernmost, to Eyolf their brother-in-law, and by that time their foster-mother was dead.

Now Eyolf redeemed all the land for the hand of those brothers, and buys Bardi out of his share, with chattels. And so the brothers now set up house on their father's lands, and they died there in old age — men of avail, though not abreast with the greatness of their family; they were married both, and men are come from them.

ENDNOTES: (1) "Thorolf", read Thorod. (2) "Eyolf of Burg", read Thorod Kegward.

CHAPTER XL. The Second Wedding Of Bardi.

Bardi rideth to the Thing after he had been one winter here in the land. Then he wooed for himself a wife, hight Aud, daughter of Snorri the Priest, and betrothed to him she was, and the bridals were settled to be at Saelings-dale in the harvest tide, at the home of Snorri her father. It is not set forth what jointure there should

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go with her from home, though like enough it be that it would be a seemly portion. She was a right stirring woman and much beloved by Snorri. Her mother was Thurid, the daughter of Illugi the Red.

Bardi rides after the Thing to Waterdale to his alliances, being now well content with his journey and having good honour of men. And things turned out even as wise men had foreseen, that the peace amongst men was well holden, even as it had been framed erst, nor telleth the tale that aught of dealings they had further together.

Now Snorri dights the bridals in the harvest tide as had been settled, and a great multitude of folk gathered there; bravely the banquet turned out as might be looked for, and there Bardi and his wife tarry the winter long. But in the spring they get them away with all their belongings, and as good friends they parted, Snorri and Bardi.

Now Bardi goeth north to Waterdale, where he tarrieth with Gudbrand his brother-in-law. And in the following spring he dighteth a journey of his, and buyeth a ship and goeth abroad, and his wife with him. The tale telleth that the journey sped well with him, and he hove in from the main up against Halogaland, where the next winter long he dwelt in Thiotta with Svein, son of Harek, being well accounted of, for men deemed they saw in him the tokens of a great man; so Svein held him dear, both him and his wife withal.

CHAPTER XLI. The End Of Bardi.

So it befell one morning, as they were both together in their sleeping loft, away from other folk, that Bardi would sleep on, but she would be rousing him, and so she took a small pillow and cast it into his face as if for sport. He threw it back again from him; and so this went on sundry times. And at last he cast it at her and let his hand go with it. She was wroth thereat, and having gotten a stone she throweth it at him in turn.

So that day, when drinking was at an end, Bardi riseth to his feet, and nameth witnesses for himself, and declareth that he is parted from Aud, saying that he will take masterful ways no more from her than from anyone else. And so fast was he set in this mind herein, that to bring words to bear was of no avail.

So their goods were divided between them, and Bardi went his ways next spring, and made no stay in his journey till he cometh into Garthrealm, where he taketh warrior's wages, and becometh one of the Vaerings, and all the Northmen held him of great account, and had him for a bosom-friend amongst themselves.

Always, when that king's realm was to be warded, he is on the ways of war, gaining good renown from his valiance, so that he has about him always a great company of men. There Bardi spent three winters, being much honoured by the king and all the Vaerings. But once it befell, as they were out on their war- galleys with an host and warded the king's realm, that there fell an host upon them; there make they a great battle, and many of the king's men fell, as they had to struggle against an overwhelming force, though ere they fell they wrought many a big deed; and therewithal fell Bardi amidst good renown, having used his weapons after the fashion of a valiant man unto death.

Aud was married again to a mighty man, the son of Thorir Hound, who was hight Sigurd. And thence are sprung the men of Birchisle, the most renowned among men.

And there endeth this story.