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Titel: Udrag fra History of the Northmen, or Danes and Normans, from the Earliest Times to the Conquest of England by William of Normandy

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\* The *Völu-Spá* gives a short account of the creation of the universe, and of the gods and men by whom it is inhabited, according to the cosmogony of the *Eldas*, and the death of Odin's son, Balder, the god of day, who is lamented by all the deities, whose tears and prayers could not avert his doom. His body is burnt on the funeral pile, with that of Nanna, his lovely bride, who had died of a broken heart, and with his horse and arms, like those of the ancient heroes of the North. His funeral obsequies are to be followed by the destruction of the universe by fire, typified in the god *Satur*, the Northern *Pluto*.

'The sun all black shall be,  
The earth sink in the sea,  
And ev'ry starry ray,  
From heav'n fade away;  
While vapours hot shall fill  
The air round *Ygdrasil*,  
And flaming as they rise,  
Play towering to the skies.'

After which a new heaven and a new earth shall appear, whilst two individuals of the human race, saved from the general destruction, shall perpetuate their species in the world thus renovated. Balder shall return again from the dark abodes of *Hela*, and reign triumphant in the mansion of the gods, once more restored to its ancient magnificence and splendor. This beautiful mythos is doubtless an image of the life of the seasons, and has reference to the celebration of the ancient festival called *Midsumers-blót* in the ancient language of the North, when the days, having reached their extreme length, begin to shorten, soon bring in their train the dog-star's burning ray, and are followed in these Northern climates, in a short transition, by the winter's cold, when all nature is wrapt in a death-like sleep, which is again succeeded by the renovating spring. But, at the same time, it probably carries with it another, a more remote and a higher signification, being, to use the words of the eloquent historian of Sweden, "a symbol of all Time, of the changes of the great Year of the World, representing the general dissolution of all things as a consequence of the first God's Death—the death of Goodness and Justice in the world. Balder returns, followed by reward and punishment, by a new heaven and a new earth. Through the truth thus inculcated, and at the same time the inviolable sanctity which the Northern mythology attaches to an oath, it rises above mere Nature and acquires a moral value for mankind."—pp. 65, 66;

In this track Mr. Wheaton might very advantageously have proceeded farther, and by gathering up the characteristics of the ancient mythology, which are to be found in so many Danish and Swedish sources, have brought the *Edda* to illustrate the whole.

The truth is, that the death of Balder, independent of all arbitrary explanation, is the great pivot in the conflict between the *Aser* and *Jotuns*, upon which the principal matter of the