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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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Hakon, the foster-son of Athelstane, are indisputable evidence of this. Of the Edda songs, the descriptions of battle are the most remarkable passages.

There is, however, a source, which has not been referred to by Mr. Wheaton, whence very valuable relics of ancient Northern poetry may be derived. Though what is there recorded is only in the shape of translation, there can be no doubt of its authenticity, and as little of its poetical recommendations. We refer to those Latin imitations of the ancient Northern songs which are to be found in the writings of Saxo-Grammaticus. These, collected by him in the twelfth century, and immediately referred to those who might have impugned their genuineness had there been any grounds for doubt, we cannot but deem of the highest value; and of literary debts, long owing and still unpaid, we think the debt to Saxo among the strongest. In his living pages will be found a moving picture of the past, which, though sometimes verging into too fanciful a world, does notwithstanding present a striking portraiture of things that were. Here may be traced the original of that master-piece of Shakspeare, his Hamlet; and here might also be followed to their sources, what Ghlenschläger and many inferior minds have made the topics of their songs.* Mr. Wheaton supposes that Hamlet (Saxo's Amlet) assisted the Saxons against the Franks in the sixth century. Where Mr. Wheaton discovered any authority for this theory, we know not, unless in that wilderness of Suhm, which the author calls a "Critical History of Denmark," and of which it has been somewhat bitterly, but not altogether undeservedly said, that every thing is to be found there, but truth.

Proceeding now to the history of the North, let the reader allow his interest to be excited, and he will find how much the events of the middle ages in general, and of the British isles in particular, will receive of light from the sources to which we are now directing his attention; he will see, that in the North there was formed an historic style in the mother-tongue, so pure, so simple, and so lively, that it might serve as a pattern even now. He will discover that one kingdom at least in the North, has an eventful history thus written, with the pencil of a Walter Scott, and will feel that it has some claim upon the attention of civilized man. Now it is really the fact, that Snorro Sturleson's "Heimskringla," or history of Norway, written in the thirteenth century, is, beyond any other, a book such as here described, which, al-

* Ewald's "Balder" and "Rolf Krage" are among the first results of the study; Ghlenschläger's "Steerkodder" followed; and Grundtvig's translation of the whole of Saxo, is a very important contribution to the subject.