

**GRETTIS SAGA. THE STORY
OF GRETTIR THE
STRONG. TRANSLATED
FROM THE ICELANDIC**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649713912

Grettis Saga. The Story of Grettir the Strong. Translated from the Icelandic by Eiríkr Magnússon & William Morris

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

EIRÍKR MAGNÚSSON & WILLIAM MORRIS

**GRETTIS SAGA. THE STORY
OF GRETTIR THE
STRONG. TRANSLATED
FROM THE ICELANDIC**

GRETTIS SAGA.

A life scarce worth the living, a poor fame
Scarce worth the winning, in a wretched land,
Where fear and pain go upon either hand,
As toward the end men fare without an aim
Unto the dull grey dark from whence they came :
Let them alone, the unshadowed sheer rocks stand
Over the twilight graves of that poor band,
Who count so little in the great world's game !

Nay, with the dead I deal not ; this man lives,
And that which carried him through good and ill,
Stern against fate while his voice echoed still
From rock to rock, now he lies silent, strives
With wasting time, and through its long lapse gives
Another friend to me, life's void to fill.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

GRETTIS SAGA.

THE STORY

OF

GRETTIR THE STRONG

TRANSLATED FROM THE ICELANDIC

BY

EIRÍKR MAGNÚSSON,

TRANSLATOR OF 'LEGENDS OF ICELAND.'

AND

WILLIAM MORRIS,

AUTHOR OF 'THE EARTHLY PARADISE.'

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

F. S. ELLIS, KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

MDCCLXIX.

PREFACE.

WE do not feel able to take in hand the wide subject of the Sagas of Iceland within the limits of a Preface; therefore we have only to say that we put forward this volume as the translation of an old story founded on facts, full of dramatic interest, and setting before people's eyes pictures of the life and manners of an interesting race of men near akin to ourselves.

Those, to whom the subject is new, we must refer to the translations already made of some other of these works,* and to the notes which accompany them: a few notes at the end of this volume may be of use to students of Saga literature.

For the original tale we think little apology is

* Such as 'Burnt Nial,' Edinburgh, 1861, 8vo, and 'Gisli the Outlaw,' Edinburgh, 1866, 4to, by Dasent; the 'Saga of Viga-Glum,' London, 1866, 8vo, by Sir F. Head; the 'Heimskringla,' London, 1844, 8vo, by S. Laing; the 'Eddas,' Prose by Dasent, Stock-

holm, 1842; Poetic by A. S. Cottle, Bristol, 1797, and Thorpe, London and Halle, 1866, and the 'Saga of Gunnlaug the Worm-tongue,' by Magnússon and Morris, in the *Portugally Review*, Jan. 1869.

due; that it holds a very high place among the Sagas of Iceland no students of that literature will deny; of these we think it yields only to the story of Njal and his sons, a work in our estimation to be placed beside the few great works of the world. Our Saga is fuller and more complete than the tale of the other great outlaw Gisli; less frightful than the wonderfully characteristic and strange history of Egil, the son of Skallagrim; as personal and dramatic as that of Gunnlaug the Worm-tongue, if it lack the rare sentiment of that beautiful story; with more detail and consistency, if with less variety, than the history of Gudrun and her lovers in the Laxdæla; and more a work of art than that, or than the unstrung gems of Eyrbyggja, and the great compilation of Snorri Sturluson, the History of the Kings of Norway.

At any rate, we repeat, whatever place among the best Sagas may be given to *Grettla** by readers of such things, it must of necessity be held to be one of the best in all ways; nor will those, we hope, of our readers who have not yet turned their attention to the works written in the Icelandic tongue, fail

* Such is the conversational title of this Saga; many of the other Sagas have their longer title abbreviated in a like manner; Egil's saga becomes *Egla*, Njal's saga *Njåla*; Eyrbyggja saga, *Laxdæla* saga, *Vatnsdæla* saga, *Reykjadal* saga, *Svarfdæla* saga, become *Eyrbyggja*, *Laxdæla*, *Vatnsdæla*, *Reykjædla*, *Svarfdæla* (gen. plur. masc. of *dælit*, dale-dwellers,

is forced into a fem. sing. regularly declined, *saga* being understood); furthermore, *Landnåma* *bók* (*landnåma*, gen. pl. neut.) the book of land settlements, becomes *Landnåma* (fem. sing. regularly declined, *bók* being understood); lastly, *Sturlunga* saga, the Saga of the mighty family of the Sturlungs, becomes *Sturlunga* in the same manner.

to be moved more or less by the dramatic power and eager interest in human character, shown by our story-teller; we say, we hope, but we are sure that no one of insight will disappoint us in this, when he has once accustomed himself to the unusual, and, if he pleases, barbarous atmosphere of these ancient stories.

As some may like to know what they are going to read about before venturing on beginning the book, we will now give a short outline of our Saga.

The first thirteen chapters (which sometimes are met with separately in the Icelandic as the Saga of Onund Treefoot), we have considered as an introduction to the story, and have accordingly distinguished them from the main body of the book. They relate the doings of Grettir's ancestors in Norway, in the lands West over the Sea and in Iceland, and are interesting and in many points necessary for the understanding of the subsequent story; one of these we note here for the reader's convenience, viz. the consanguinity of Grettir and King Olaf the Saint;* for it adds strongly to the significance of the King's refusal to entertain Grettir at his court, or to go further into the case of the murder he was falsely accused of.

The genealogies of this part of the work agree

