

STORIES OF THE NORSEMEN

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Stories of the Norsemen by Daniel P. Kidder

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DANIEL P. KIDDER

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THE NORSEMEN**



RAGNAR LODBROK AND THE SERPENT.

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P R E F A C E .

It is intended, in the following pages, to present a series of life-pictures, taken from that eventful portion of time in which the Norwegian people were so closely connected, both by invasion and colonization, with Great Britain and Ireland. This period of international communication began about the middle of the ninth century, when the northern pirates, (or Vikings, as they were then termed,) having made a descent upon the north-eastern coast of England under Ragnar Lodbrok, established themselves in Northumbria, which thus became a Danish^o kingdom, tributary, often only in name, to the Anglo-

^o It may be well to observe, that in our Anglo-Saxon history, all the northern people by whom England was invaded and overrun, were classed under the common appellation of "Danes."

Saxon kings. This period may be said to have terminated in 1066, when the renowned Harald Hardråde, King of Norway, landed in Yorkshire as the ally and supporter of Tostig, and was slain by the Saxon King Harold;—he who, only a few days later, perished in battle with William the Conqueror; Harald Hardråde's death being thus virtually avenged by one who, although a Frenchman by birth, was sprung from the same old race of Norsemen as himself.

The portion of history delineated in these pages being almost unknown to the youthful reader, it has been attempted, as far as possible, to offer a connected series of sketches, by means of which some idea may be formed of the social habits and manners of that barbarous period, and some knowledge acquired of the principal events of Norwegian history.

The following stories are strictly historical, as may be ascertained by a perusal of Snorro Sturleson's Chronicle of the Kings of

Norway, translated by Mr. Laing, and also of the first volume of Fryxell's History of Sweden. The History of the Anglo-Saxons by Sharon Turner, and Lappenberg's History of the Anglo-Saxon Kings, have likewise been frequently consulted for the verification of dates and events. It is, however, chiefly to the valuable translation of Mr. Laing that we are indebted for the substance, and even for the minutest particulars, of the ensuing stories.

In conclusion, we would suggest, that whatever degree of interest may attach to the following narratives, it increases tenfold when we reflect that it is to these rude Norwegians we are indebted for the germ of our national character, as well as our social institutions. One of our best modern poets has told us that

“The child is father to the man;”

as truly may it be affirmed that the untutored Norseman, with his hardy habits,

manly bearing, and resolute attachment to the laws and customs of his country, was the truest type as well as the progenitor of that race, who even now are distinguished among all the nations of the earth for their enterprise and stability.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE series of Short Stories from History, of which this volume is one, was originally published by the English "Society for promoting Christian Knowledge."

The series, for the present, will consist of ten volumes, viz:

ANCIENT ROME, 2 vols.	SWEDEN.
THE NORSEMEN.	FRANCE.
ENGLAND, 2 vols.	ITALY.
SPAIN.	MEXICO.

Other volumes may be added hereafter.

These brief narratives of leading historical events were prepared in a style not only well calculated to interest young persons, but to give them a taste for more systematic and extensive historical reading. They are also interwoven with appropriate moral reflections.