

**STILFRID & BRUNSWIK: TWO  
CHIVALROUS ROMANCES  
OF THE 14TH CENTURY, TR.  
FROM THE ORIG. BOHEMIAN**

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A. H. Wratislaw

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**A. H. WRATISLAW**

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*STILFRID & BRUNSWIK:*

**Two Chivalrous Romances**

OF

THE 14<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL BOHEMIAN

BY

A. H. WRATISLAW, M.A., F.R.H.S.



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### Introduction.

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**T**HE Romances of **STILFRID** and his son **BRUNSWIK** belong to the class of chivalrous stories, of which the best known example in our own language is the 'Morte d' Arthur' of Sir Thomas Malory. That of Stilfrid appears worthy to have formed an episode in that beautiful work, while the history of Brunswik, though exceedingly amusing, is fitter company for some of those committed to the flames by the friends of Don Quixote. Stilfrid was originally written in verse, as is very manifest from the constant recurrence of rhymes and measured lines in the original, a phenomenon of which Brunswik exhibits far fewer traces. It is supposed that the writer or writers had in view the exploits of Duke Wratislaw II. of Bohemia, who in 1086 obtained the royal dig-

nity, for life only, from the Emperor Henry IV. in return for his heroic services against the adherents of Pope Gregory VII.; and those of Duke Wladislaw II., who in 1158 received the crown for himself and his successors from the hands of the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, in return for past services in Poland and in expectation of future services in Lombardy, where the subsequent achievements of the Bohemian forces were very remarkable. To Wladislaw was also granted, as an armorial bearing, the lion, which is still the national emblem of Bohemia. Some of the adventures will remind us of the German Siegfrid, and others of our old friend Sindbad, whose 'roc' reappears under a new name. Sir Percivale de Galis also in the 'Morte d'Arthur' (xiv. 6.) performs an exploit similar to that of Brunswik in assisting a lion to overcome a serpent.

It is hard to believe that these two romances can have proceeded from the same pen, so superior is that of Stilfrid to the other in style, dignity and morality. There is a noble disregard of geography in both, far out-heroding



Shakespeare's sea-coast of Bohemia; and in *Stilfrid* the author actually finds a difficulty in distinguishing between England and Mesopotamia. K. J. Erben, the Editor of the Bohemian works of John Huss, has reprinted both these romances, from a manuscript of the fifteenth century, in his '*Vybor z literatury Czeské*' ('Selection from Bohemian literature'), and it is from this edition that the present translation has been made.

It will be remarked at once, that the names of the heroes are German rather than Bohemian. This is to be accounted for by the fact, that during the latter part of the long reign of the Emperor Charles IV. in Bohemia (1346—1378) and also during part of that of his son, King Wenceslas IV., Prague was the capital of the whole German empire. It being the aim of Charles IV. to constitute it such permanently, every exertion was made to render the German language fashionable and general, and many purely Bohemian places and families received German names, which they bear at the present day.

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### Stilfrid.

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**I**N the land of Bohemia there was a lord and prince, whose name was STILFRID. He was a man of lofty mind, and prided himself on accomplishing whatsoever he devised. He had a very beautiful wife, named Theodora, daughter of the King of Lombardy, by whom he had a son, whom he commanded to be named BRUNSWIK. Once upon a time Stilfrid began to discourse with his wife, saying; "Dear lady I know that our parents gave us this counsel, that, if possible, we should win honour and a good name for our nation. Now I have devised to go forth and not return back, even if I give my life for it, until I win greater honour for myself and my country; for this kettle,\*

\*Dalemil in his verse chronicle, the earliest entire MS. of which was lately found in the Library of Trinity College,