

The Saga of the Heath Slayings

Translation: William Morris and Eiríkr Magnússon

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The first fifteen chapters of this saga were lost during the Great Fire of Copenhagen.

Chapter 16 - Thorarin Bids Bardi Concerning The Choosing Of Men.

Now Bardi and his brethren had on hand much wright's work that summer, and the work went well the summer through, whereas it was better ordered than heretofore. Now summer had worn so far that but six weeks thereof were left. Then fares Bardi to Lechmote to meet Thorarin his fosterer; often they talked together privily a long while, and men knew not clearly what they said.

"Now will there be a man-mote," says Thorarin, "betwixt the Hope and Huna-water, at the place called Thing-ere. But I have so wrought it that heretofore none have been holden.

"Now shalt thou fare thither and prove thy friends; because now I look for it that many men will be together there, since man-motes have so long been put off. In crowds they will be there, and I ween that Haldor thy foster-brother will come thither. Crave thou fellowship of him and avail, if thine heart is anywise set on faring away from the country-side and the avenging of thy brother.

"A stead there is called Bank, lying west of Huna-water;" there dwelt a woman hight Thordis, by-named Gefn, a widow; there was a man with her over her housekeeping, hight Odd, a mighty man of his hands, not exceeding wealthy nor of great kin, but a man well renowned. "Of him shalt thou crave following; for he shall rule his answer himself."

"In that country is a place called Blizzard-mere, where are many steads, one of which is Middleham;" there dwelt a man hight Thorgisl; he was by kin mother's sister's son of Gefn's-Odd; a valiant man and a good skald, a man of good wealth, and a mighty man of his hands. "Call thou on him to fare with thee."

"A stead there is hight Bowerfell, twixt Swinewater and Blanda; it is on the Necks to the westward." There dwelt a man hight Eric, by-named Wide-sight; he was a skald and no little man of might. "Him shalt thou call to thy fellowship."

"In Longdale is a house called Audolfstead," where dwelt the man hight Audolf; "he is a good fellow and mighty of his hands; his brother is Thorwald." He is not told of as having aught to do with the journey; he dwelt at the place called Evendale, which lieth up from Swinewater. "There are two steads so called." He was the strongest man of might of all the North-country. "Him shalt thou not call on for this journey, and the mood of his mind is the reason for why."

"There is a stead called Swinewater;" and there dwelt the man hight Summerlid, who was by-named the Yeller, wealthy of fee and of good account. There dwelt in the house with him his daughter's son who hight Thorliot, Yeller's fosterling, a valiant man. "Pray him to be of thy fellowship."

A man hight Eyolf dwelt at Asmund's-nip, "which is betwixt the Water and Willowdale." "Him shalt thou meet and bid him fare with thee; he is our friend."

"Now meseemeth," saith he, "that little will come of it though thou putttest this forward at the man-mote; but sound them there about the matter, and say thou. that they shall not be bound to fare with thee, if thou comest not to each one of them on the Saturday whenas it lacketh yet five weeks of

winter. And none such shalt thou have with thee who is not ready to go, for such an one is not right trusty. Therefore shalt thou the rather choose these men to fare with thee than others of the country-side, whereas they are near akin to each other; they are men of good wealth, and so also their kinsmen no less; so that they are all as one man. Withal they are the doughtiest men of all who are here in Willowdale, and in all our parishes; and they will be best willed towards thy furtherance who are most our friends. Now is it quite another thing to have with one good men and brave, rather than runagates untried, men of nought, to fall back upon, if any trouble happen. Now withal thy home-men are ready to fare with thee, and thy neighbours, who are both of thy kindred and thine alliance: such as Eyolf of Burg thy brother- in-law, a doughty man, and a good fellow."

"There is a stead called Ternmere in Westhope, where dwell two brothers." One was hight Thorod, the other Thorgisl; they were the sons of Hermund, and nephews of Bardi as to kinship; men of good wealth, great champions, and good of daring. "These men will be ready to fare with thee."

Two brothers yet are named who lived at Bardi's home, one hight Olaf, the other Day, sons of a sister of Bardi's mother, and they had grown up there in Gudmund's house; "they be ready to fare with thee."

Two men more are named, one hight Gris and by-named Kollgris, a man reared there at Asbiorn's-ness. He was a deft man and the foreman of them there, and had for long been of good-will toward them.

The other hight Thord, by-named Fox; he was the fosterling of Thurid and Gufimund. They had taken him a little bairn from off the road, and had reared him. He was a full ripe man, and well of his hands; and men say that there was nought either of word or deed that might not be looked for of him; Gudmund and his wife loved him much, and made more of him than he was of worth. "This man will be ready to fare from home with thee."

Now are the men named who were to fare with Bardi.

And when they had held such talk, they sundered.

Chapter 17 - Of Bardi's Way-Fellows.

The Lord's day cometh Bardi to Lechmote, and rideth on thence to the man-mote; and by then he came was much folk there come, and good game is toward. Now were men eager for game, whereas the man-motes had been dropped so long. Little was done in the case, though men were busy in talk at that meeting.

Now the foster-brethren Haldor and Bardi fell to talk together, and Bardi asks whether he would fare with him somewhat from out the country-side that autumn. Says Haldor: "Belike it will be found that on my part I utter not a very manly word, when I say that my mind is not made up for this journey. Now all things are ready for my faring abroad, on which faring I have been twice bent already. But I have settled this in my mind, if ever perchance I may have my will, to be to thee of avail that may be still greater, shouldst thou be in need of it, and ever hereafter if thou be hard bestead; and this also is a cause hereof, that there are many meeter than I for the journey that, as my mind tells me, thou art bent on."

Bardi understood that so it was as he said, and he said that he would be no worse friend to him than heretofore.

"But I will bid thee somewhat," says Haldor; "it befell here last summer, that I fell out with a man hight Thorarin, and he was wounded by my onslaught. He is of little account for his own sake, but those men claim boot for him of whose Thing he is, and of much account are they. Now it is not meet for me to put Eilif and Hoskuld from the boot, so I will thou make peace for me in the matter, as I cannot bring myself to it, whereas I have nay- said hitherto to offer them atonement."

Then goeth Bardi forthwith to meet Eilif and Hoskuld, and straightway takes up the word on behalf of Haldor, and they bespeak a meeting between themselves for the appeasing of the case, when it lacked four weeks of winter, at the Cliffs, Thorarin's dwelling.

Now cometh Bardi to speech with Gefn's-Odd that he should fare with him south to Burgfirth.

Odd answereth his word speedily: "Yea, though thou hadst called on me last winter, or two winters ago, I had been all ready for this journey."

Then met Bardi Thorgisl, the sister's son of Odd's mother, and put the same words before him. He answereth: "That will men say, that thou hast not spoken hereof before it was to be looked for, and fare shall I if thou willest."

Then meeteth he Arngrim, the fosterling of Audolf, and asked him if he would be in the journey with him; and he answereth: "Ready am I, when thou art ready."

The same talk held he with all them afore-named, and all they took his word well.

Now spake Bardi: "In manly wise have ye dealt with me herein; now therefore will I come unto you on the Saturday, when it lacketh five weeks of winter; and if I come not thus, then are ye nowise bound to fare with me."

Now ride men home from the man-mote, and they meet, the foster- father and son, Thorarin and Bardi, and Bardi tells him of the talk betwixt him and Haldor. Thorarin showed that it liked him well, and said that the journey would happen none the less though Haldor fared not. "Yea, he may yet stand thee in good stead. And know that I have made men ware of this journey for so short a while, because I would that as late as might be aforehand should it be heard of in the country of those Burgfirthers."

Chapter 18 - Of Bardi And His Workman Thord The Fox.

Now wears the time, till Friday of the sixth week, and at nones of that day home came the home-men of Bardi, and had by then pretty much finished with their hay-work.

Bardi and his brethren were without, when the workmen came, and they greeted them well. They had their work-tools with them, and Thord the Fox was dragging his scythe behind him.

Quoth Bardi: "Now draggeth the Fox his brush behind him."

"So is it," saith Thord, "that I drag my brush behind me, and cock it up but little or nought; but this my mind bodes me, that thou wilt trail thy brush very long or ever thou avenge Hall thy brother."

Bardi gave him back no word in revenge, and men go to table.

Those brethren were speedy with their meat, and stood up from table straightway, and Bardi goeth up to Thord the Fox and spake with him, laying before him the work he shall do that evening and the day after, Saturday to wit.

Forty haycocks lay yet ungathered together in Asbiorn's-ness; and he was to gather them together, and have done with it that evening. "Moreover, to-morrow shalt thou fare to fetch our bell- wether hight the Flinger, whereas our wethers be gone from the sheepwalks, and come into the home-pastures."

Now he bade Thord to this, because the wether was worse to catch than other sheep, and swifter withal. "Now further to-morrow shalt thou go to Ambardale, and fetch home the five-year-old ox which we have there, and slaughter him, and bring all the carcass south to Burg on Saturday. Great is the work, but if thou win it not, then shalt thou try which of us bears the brush most cocked thenceforward."

Thord answered and said that often he had heard his big threats; and thereof he is nowise blate.

Now rideth Bardi in the evening to Lechmote, and the brethren together, and Bardi and Thorarin talk together the evening through.

Chapter 19 - Concerning Thord The Fox

Now it is to be told of Thord's business, how he got through with it. He gathered together the hay which had stood less safely; and when he came home, then was the shepherd about driving the sheep out to the Cliffs, and Thord rides the horse whereon he had been carting the evening long. Now he finds the flock of wethers to which he had been told off, but could not overhaul them till he got out to Hope-oyce; so he slaughters that wether and rideth home with the carcass. By this time he has foundered the horse; so he takes another, and gallops over the dale, as forthright the way lay, nor did he heed whether he was faring by night or by day. He cometh to Ambardale in early morn, and getteth the ox, and slaughtereth him and dighteth him, bindeth the carcass on his horse, and going his ways cometh home again, and layeth down the carcass. Then he taketh out the carcass of the wether, and when he cometh back one limb of the ox is gone. No good words spake Thord thereover; but a man owneth that he had taken it away, and bids him be nought so bold as to speak aught thereof unless he would have a clout. So Thord taketh the rest of the carcass, and fareth south to Burg as he had been bidden.

There Alof, the sister of Bardi, and her foster-mother taketh in the flesh-meat. The foster-mother also hight Alof, a wise woman, and foster-mother also of Bardi and the other sons of Gudmund. She was called Kiannok, and thus by that name were the two Alofs known apart. Alof, Bardi's fosterer, was wise exceedingly; she could see clearly a many things, and was well-wishing to the sons of Gudmund. She was full of lore, and ancient things were stored in her mind.

Chapter 20 - Of The Horses Of Thord Of Broadford.

Now must it be told what wise they talked together, Thorarin his fosterer and Bardi, before Bardi got to the road; they talked of a many things.

It was early of the Saturday morning, whereon he should go meet his fellows who were to fare with him. But when he was ready to ride, there were led forth two horses, white with black ears either of them. Those horses did Thord of Broadford own, and they had vanished away that summer from the Thing.

Now spake Thorarin: "Here are Thord's horses; thou shalt go and bring them to him, and take no reward therefor: neither is it worth rewarding; for I it was who caused them to vanish away, and they have been in my keeping, and hard enough matter for me has it been to see to their not being taken and used. But for this cause let I take these horses, that meseemed it would be more of an errand to ask

after these horses than mere jades. So I have often sent men south to Burgfirth this summer to ask after them. Meseemed that was a noteworthy errand, and that they would not see through my device; and I have but newly sent a man south, and from the south will he come to-morrow, and tell us tidings of the South-country."

Now just then was there a market toward at Whitewater-meads, and ships were come from the main but a little while before these things befell.

Chapter 21 - Bardi Gathers In His Following.

Now rideth Bardi thence and cometh to Bank, whereas dwelt Thordis, and there stood a saddled horse and a shield there beside him, and they rode home to the house with much din in the home-mead over the hard field.

Without there was a man, and a woman with him, who was washing his head; and these were Thordis and Odd, and she had not quite done the washing of his head, and had not yet washed the lather therefrom.

So straightway when he saw Bardi he sprang up, and welcomed him laughing.

Bardi took his greeting well, and bade the woman finish her work and wash him better.

Even so he let her do, and arrayed himself and went with Bardi.

Now came they north over Blanda to Broadford, and brought Thord his horses.

It is to be told that, at that time in the week just worn, was Thorgisl Arason ridden north to Eyiafirth, whereas he was to be wedded at Thwartwater, and he was to be looked for from the north the next week after. Thord takes his horses well, and offers some good geldings as a reward. But Bardi said that he would take no reward therefor; and such, he said, was the bidding of him who had found the horses. "Thou, friend," saith he, "shalt be my friend at need."

Then Bardi rides into Longdale, and over the meadows close anigh to the stead of Audolf; and they saw how a man rode down from the home-mead, and they deemed it would be Arngrim their fellow; and he rideth with them.

Now ride they west over Blanda to Eric Widesight, and they came there by then the sheep were being tended at morning-meal time, betwixt noon and day-meal, and they come on the shepherd and ask him whether Eric were at home.

He said that Eric was a-horseback at sunrise, "and now we know not whither he has ridden."

"What thinkest thou mostlike as to where he has ridden?" says Bardi. For it cometh into his mind that he will have slunk away, and will not fare with them. But nought was it found to be so that he had slunk off away. Now they saw two men riding down along Swinewater; for thence from the stead one could see wide about, and they knew them for Eric Wide-sight and Thorliot, Yeller's fosterling. They met there whereas the water hight Laxwater falleth out of Swinewater, and either greeted the other well.

Now they ride till they come to Thorgisl of Middleham; they greeted each other well and ride away thence and come hard on Gorge-water. Then said Bardi that men should ride to the stead at Asmund's-nip and meet Eyolf Oddson. "There rideth a man," said he, "nor laggardly either, from the

stead, and down along the river; and meseemeth," saith he, "that there will be Eyolf; I deem that he will be at the ford by then we come there; so ride we forth."

So did they, and saw a man by the ford, and knew him for Eyolf; and they met and greeted each other well. Then they go their ways and come to the place called Ash in Willowdale. Then there came riding up to meet Bardi and his fellowship three men in coloured raiment, and they met presently, whereas each were riding towards the other; and two sister's sons of Bardi were in that company, and one hight Lambkar and the other Hun; but the third man in their fellowship was a Waterdaler. They had all come out and landed west in Willowdale, but Gudbrand their father and Gudrun their mother dwelt west in Willowdale, at the stead called thereafter Gudbrandstead.

Now was there a joyful meeting betwixt those kinsmen, whereas Bardi met his sister's sons, and either told the other what tidings there were.

Bardi tells of his journey, whither he was bound.

These men were eighteen winters old, and had been abroad one winter. They were the noblest of men both for goodlihead and might, and goodly crafts and deftness, and moreover they would have been accounted of as doughty of deed even had they come already to their full age.

Now they took counsel together, and said that they were minded to betake them to the journey with them, but their fellow fared away into Willowdale.

Now Bardi rides till he comes to Lechmote, and tells his fosterer how matters stood. Thorarin says: "Now shalt thou ride home to Asbiorn's-ness; but to-morrow will I ride to meet thee, and Thorberg my son with me; and then will I ride on the way with you."

Chapter 22 - Of The Egging-On of Thurid

Now fares Bardi home with his fellowship, and abides at home that night. On the morrow Kollgris arrays them breakfast; but the custom it was that the meat was laid on the board before men, and no dishes there were in those days. Then befell this unlooked-for thing, that three portions were gone from three men. Kollgris went and told Bardi thereof.

"Go on digting the board," said he, "and speak not thereof before other men."

But Thurid said that to those sons of hers he should deal no portion of breakfast, but she would deal it.

Kollgris did even so, and set forth the board, a trencher for each man, and set meat thereon.

Then went in Thurid and laid a portion before each of those brethren, and there was now that ox-shoulder cut up in three.

Taketh up Steingrim the word and said: "Hugely is this carved, mother, nor hast thou been wont to give men meat in such measureless fashion. Unmeasured mood there is herein, and nigh witless of wits art thou become."

She answereth: "No marvel is this, and nought hast thou to wonder thereat; for bigger was Hall thy brother caryen, and I heard ye tell nought thereof that any wonder was that."

She let a stone go with the flesh-meat for each one of them; and they asked what that might betoken. She answereth: "Of that ye brethren have most which is no more likely for avail than are these stones (for food), insomuch as ye have not dared to avenge Hall your brother, such a man as he was; and far off have ye fallen away from your kinsmen, the men of great worth, who would not have sat down under such shame and disgrace as yea long while have done, and gotten the blame of many therefor."

Then she walked up along the floor shrieking, and sang a stave:

"I say that the cravers of songs of the battle
Now soon shall be casting their shame-word on Bardi.
The tale shall be told of thee, God of the wound-worm,
That thy yore-agone kindred with shame thou undoest;
Unless thou, the ruler of light once a-lying
All under the fish-road shall let it be done,
That the lathe-fire's bidders at last be red-hooded.
Let all folk be hearkening this song of my singing."

Chapter 23 - How Foster-Father And Foster-Mother Array Bardi

Now Bardi and his flock ride their ways till they are but a little short of Burg. Then ride up certain men to meet them, who but Thorarin the Priest, Bardi's fosterer, and Thorberg his son.

They straightway fall to talk, and the fosterer and fosterling come to speech. "Nay, foster-father," saith Bardi, "great is the sword which thou layest there across thy knee."

"Hast thou not seen me have this weapon before, thou heedful and watchful?" saith Thorarin. "So it is, I have not had it before. And now shall we two shift weapons; I shall have that which thou now hast."

So did they; and Bardi asks whence it came to him. He told him, with all the haps of how it fared betwixt him who owned it and Lyng-Torfi, and how he had drawn him in to seek the weapons. "But Thorberg my son hath the other weapon, and Thorbiorn owns that, but Thorgaut owns that which thou hast. Most meet it seemed to me, that their own weapons should lay low their pride and masterful mood; therefore devised I this device, and therewithal this, that thou mightest avenge thee of the shame that they have done to thee and thy kindred. Now will I that thou be true to my counsel with me, such labour as I have put forth for thine honour."

Now ride they into the home-mead of Burg unto Eyolf, the brother- in-law of those brethren. There were two harnessed horses before the door when Bardi came into the garth; and on one of them was the victual of the brethren, and were meant for provision for their journey; and that was the meaning of the new-slain flesh- meat which Bardi let bring thither erst; but Alof their sister and Kiannok, Bardi's foster-mother, had dight the same.

Now Eyolf leaps a-horseback and is all ready to ride into the home-mead from the doors. Then came out a woman and called on Bardi, and said that he should ride back to the doors, and that she had will to speak with him; and she was Alof, his sister. He bade the others ride on before, and said that he would not tarry them.

So he cometh to the door and asketh her what she would. She biddeth him light down and come see his foster-mother. So did he, and went in. The carline was muttering up at the further end of the chamber, as she lay in her bed there. "Who goeth there now?" says she.

He answereth: "Now is Bardi here; what wilt thou with me, foster- mother?"

"Come thou hither," saith she; "welcome art thou now. Now have I slept," saith she, "but I waked through the night arraying thy victual along with thy sister. Come thou hither, and I will stroke thee over."

Bardi did according to her word, for he loved her much.

She fell to work, beginning with the crown of his head and stroked him all over right down to the toes.

Bardi said: "What feelest thou herein, and what art thou minded will be, that thou strokest me so carefully?"

She answereth: "I think well of it; nowhere meseemeth is aught in the way of a big bump, to come upon."

Bardi was a big man and stark of pith, and thick was the neck of him; she spans his neck with her hands, and taketh from her sark a big pair of beads which was hers, and winds it about his neck, and draggeth his shirt up over it.

He had a whittle at his neck in a chain, and that she let abide. Then she bade him farewell; and he rideth away now after his fellows; but she called after him, "Let it now abide so arrayed, as I have arrayed it; and meseemeth that then things will go well."

Chapter 24 - Of Thorarin's Arraying.

Now when he cometh up with his fellowship, they ride their ways. Thorarin fared long on the road with them, and layeth down, how they shall go about their journey, deeming that much lay on it that they should fare well.

"A place for guesting have I gotten you," saith he, "in Nipsdale, which ye shall take. The bonder whereas ye shall harbour to-night is one Nial. So it is told," said he, "that, as to other men, he is no great thane with his wealth, though he hath enough; but this I wot that he will take you in at the bidding of my word. But now is the man come hither who last night rode from Burgfirth and the south, he whom I sent south this week to wot tidings of the country-side. And this he knoweth clearly as a true tale, that Hermund Illugison will be at the market the beginning of this week with many other men of the country-side. This also ye will have heard, that those brethren, the sons of Thorgaut, have a business on their hands this summer, to wit, to mow the meadow which is called Goldmead; and now is the work well forward, so that it will be done on Wednesday of this week; so that they must needs be at home. Now I have heard that which they are wont to fall to speech of, those Gislungs, when there is any clatter or noise; then say they, 'What! Will Bardi be come?' and thereof make they much jeering and mocking for the shaming of you. Now it is also told north here, and avouched to be thoroughly true, that this have the men of the country-side agreed to, that if any tidings befall in the country such as be of men's fashioning, then shall all men be bound to ride after them, the reason thereof being that Snorri the Priest and his folk slept but a short way from the steeds after that slaying and big deed of his. And everyone who is not ready hereto shall be fined in three marks of silver, if he belong to those who have 'thingfare-pay' to yield, from Havenfells to North-water, whereas there dwelleth the greatest number of the Thingmen of the Sidefolk and those of Flokis-dale. So ride ye on the Monday from

Nial's, and fare leisurely and have night-harbour on the Heath" (thence gat it the name of Two-day's Heath), "and ye shall come to those two fighting-steads which be on the Heath, as ye go south, and look to it if they be as I tell you. There is a place called the Mires on the Heath, whence the fall of water is great; and in the northern Mire is a water whereinto reacheth a ness, no bigger at its upper part than nine men may stand abreast thereon; and from that mere waters run northward to our country-sides; and thither would I bid you to. But another fighting-stead is there in the southern Mire, which I would not so much have you hold as the other, and it will be worse for you if you shall have to make a shift there for safeguard. There also goeth a ness into the water. Thereon may eighteen men stand abreast, and the waters fall thence from that mere south into the country.

"But ye shall come south on Wednesday to the fell-bothies whenas all men are gone from the bothies all up and down Copsedale; for all the Sidemen have mountain business there, and there hitherto have tarried. Now meseemeth that ye will come thither nigh to nones of the day. Then shall two of your company ride down into the country-side there, and along the fell, and so to the Bridge, and not come into the peopled parts till ye are south of the river. Then shall ye come to the stead called Hallward-stead, and ask the goodman for tidings, and ask after those horses which have vanished away from the North-country. Ye shall ask also of tidings from the market. Then will ye see on Goldmead, whereas ye fare down along the river, whether men be a mowing thereon, even as the rumour goes.

"Then shall ye ride up along to the ford, and let the goodman show you the way to the ford; and so ride thence up towards the Heath and on to the Heath, whence ye may look down on Goldmead whereas ye fare along the river. Now on Wednesday morning shalt thou fare down on to the bridge, whence ye may see what may be toward in the country-side; and thou shalt sunder thy company for three places, to wit, the eighteen all told; but the nineteenth shall abide behind to heed your horses, and that shall be Kollgris, and let them be ready when ye need to take to them.

"Now six men shall be up on the bridge; and I shall make it clear who they shall be, and why it shall be arrayed that way. There shall be those kinsmen Thorgisl of Middleham and Arngrim, and Eric Wide-sight, and Thorliot, Yeller's fosterling, and Eyolf of Asmund's-nip; and for this reason shall they sit there, because they would be the stiffest to thee and the hardest to sway whenas ye come into the country-side, and it behoveth you not that ye lack measure and quieting now and again.

"But midway shall sit other six: the brethren Thorod and Thorgisl of Ternmere" (the sons of the brother of Bardi's father), "then the third man who came instead of Haldor; therewithal shall be the sons of thy mother's sister, Hun and Lambkar; and Eyolf, thy brother-in-law, for the sixth; they shall be somewhat more obedient to thy counsel, and not fare with suchlike fury. And for this reason shall they sit there, that they may look on the goings of men about the country-side.

"But ye six shall fare down (into the country), to wit, thou and Stein and Steingrim, thy brethren, and Olaf and Day and Thord. They will be the most obedient to thy word; yet shall ye have strength enough for those on the Mead.

"Now shall ye fare away forthright after ye have done them a scathe whereas the chase will not fail you, and less labour will they lay thereon, if there be but seen six men of you, and there will not be a great throng at your heels if so ye go on.

"Now shall ye ride away at your swiftest until ye are come to the northern fighting-stead upon the Heath; because that thence all verdicts go to the north, and therein is the greatest avail to you that so things should turn out.

"And yet I misdoubt me that thou wilt not bring this about, because of the frowardness of them that follow thee.

"Now must we sunder for this while, and meet we hail hereafter."

Chapter 25 - Of Bardi's Two Spies.

Now comes Bardi with his flock to Nial's in the evening. Nial is standing without, and bids them all guesting as one merry with ale; that they take, let loose their horses, and sit them down on either bench. Nial is without that evening, and his wife with him, dighting victual for their guests; but his young lad was within, and made game with them.

Bardi asked the lad if he had ever a whetstone. "I wot," saith he, "of a hard-stone which my father owns, but I durst not take it."

"I will buy it of thee," saith Bardi, "and give thee a whittle therefor."

"Yea," said the lad, "why then should I not strike a bargain with thee;" and goeth and findeth the hard-stone, and giveth it to Bardi. Bardi handles it, and taketh the whittle from his neck, and therewith was somewhat shifted the pair of beads which the carline had done about his neck, whereof is told sithence.

Now they whet their weapons, and the lad thinketh he hath done them a good turn, whereas they have what they needed. So there they abide the night through, and have good cheer.

They ride their ways on the Monday in good weather, and go not hard. Bardi asks of Eric Wide-sight what wise he deemed things would go. He answereth:

"O Lime-tree, upbearer of board of the corpses,
We nineteen together have gone from the Northland;
All over the Heath have we wended together,
And our will is to nourish the bloodfowl with victual.
But, O lad of the steed that is stalled on the rollers,
The steed of the sea-rover Heite, well wot we
That fewer shall wend we our ways from the Southland.
Now the mind of the singer is bent on the battle."

Chapter 26 - Portents At Walls.

Now must somewhat be told about the men of that country who now come into our matter. Thorbiorn Brunison rose up early at Walls, and bade his house-carle rise with him. "To-day shall we fare to Thorgaut to the stithy, and there shall we smithy."

Now that was early, just at the sun's uprising. Thorbiorn called for their breakfast, and nought is told of what of things was brought forward, but that the goodwife set a bowl on the board. Thorbiorn cried out that he was nought well served, and he drave the bowl betwixt the shoulders of her. She turned about thereat, and cried out aloud, and was shrewish of tongue, and either was hard on the other.

"Thou hast brought that before me," said he, "wherein there is nought save blood, and a wonder it is that thou seest nothing amiss therein."

Then she answereth calmly: "I brought nought before thee which thou mightest not well eat; and none the worse do I think of the wonder thou seest, whereas it betokens that thou shalt be speedily in hell. For assuredly this will be thy fetch."

He sang a stave:

"The wealth-bearing stem that for wife we are owning,
The black coif of widowhood never shall bear
For my death; though I know that the field of the necklace
All the days of my life neath the mould would be laying:
She who filleth the ale round would give for my eating
The apples of hell-orchard. Evil unheard of!
But that wealth-bearing board now will scarcely meseemeth
Have might for the bringing this evil about."

Chapter 27 - The Slaying Of Gisli.

Now has Bardi arrayed his folk in their lurking-places, as his fosterer had taught him, even as is aforesaid, and he tells them all what he had forecast in his mind.

Then they were somewhat better content therewith, and deemed that what was minded would be brought about; and they gave out that they liked this array, so to say, but they said nevertheless that to their minds the doings would be but little.

There was then a big wood on Whitewater-side, such as in those days were wide about the land here, and six of them sat down above the wood, and saw clearly what befell on Goldmead. Bardi was in the wood, and well-nigh he and the six of them within touch of them that were a-mowing. Now Bardi scans heedfully how many men were at the mowing; and he deemed that he did not clearly know whether the third man, who was white about the head, would be a woman, or whether it would be Gisli.

Now they went down from under the wood one after other; and it seemed first to those sons of Thorgaut as if but one man went there; and Thormod, who mowed the last in the meadow, took up the word. "There go men," said he.

"But it seemeth to me," said Gisli, "that but one man goeth there;" but they went hard, yet did not run.

"That is not so," said Ketil Brusi; "men are there, and not so few."

So they stood still, and looked thereon, and Ketil said: "Will not Bardi be there? That is not unlike him; and no man have I skill to know if yon be not he. And that wise was he arrayed last summer at the Thing."

Those brethren, Ketil and Thormod, looked on; but Gisli went on mowing and took up the word. "So speak .ye," said he, "as if Bardi would be coming from out of every bush all the summer. And he has not come yet."

Bardi and his folk had portioned out the men to them beforehand, that two should fall on each one of them. Bardi and Stein were to take Ketil Brusi, who was mighty of strength; Day and Olaf were to go against Gisli; Steingrim and Thord were to go against Thormod. So now they turn on them.

Now spake Ketil: "No lie it was that Bardi is come!"

They would fain catch up their weapons, but none of them gat hold of the weapons.

Now when they see into what plight they were come, Gisli and Ketil would run for the homestead garth, and Bardi and four of his fellows followed after them; but Thormod turns down to the river, and after him went Thord and Steingrim, and chased him into the river and stoned him from the shore; he got him over the river, and came off well.

Now came those brethren to the garth, and Ketil was the swifter, and leapt over it into the mead; but whenas Gisli leapt at the garth, a turf fell therefrom, and he slipped; therewith came up Bardi, who was the swiftest of those men, and hewed at him with the sword Thorgaut's-loom, and hewed off well-nigh all the face of him.

Straightway then he turns to meet his fellows, and tells them that something of a wound had been wrought. They said that the onset was but little and unwarrior-like. But he said that things would have to be as they were. "And now shall we turn back."

Needs must he rule, though it was much against their will.

But Ketil dragged Gisli in over the garth, and cast him on his back, and they saw that he was no heavy burden to him; and he ran home to the stead.

Thorbiorn and Thorgaut were in the stithy abiding till the house-carle should come back with the smithying stuff.

Now Thorgaut spake: "Yea, there is great noise and clatter; is not Bardi come?"

Even in that nick of time came Ketil into the stithy, and said: "That found Gisli thy son, that come he is;" and he cast him dead before his feet.

Now Bardi turns to meet his fellows, and said that he was minded that now man was come to be set against man. Quoth they, that the men were nowise equal, and that little had been done though one man had been slain, and so long a way as they had fared thereto.

So when all the fellowship met, then said they who had been higher up in the lurking-places, that full surely they would not have fared if they had known they should thus have to leave off in this way, that no more vengeance should follow after such a grief as had been done them, and they said that Gisli and Hall were men nowise equal. And they laid blame on Bardi, and said that they were minded to think that more would have been done if they had stood anear. Then they went to their horses, and said that they would have breakfast. Bardi bade them have no heed of breakfast, but they said that they had no will to fast. "And we know not how to think whatwise thou wouldst have come away if thou hadst done that wherein was some boldness."

Bardi said that he heeded not what they said. So they had their meat.

Chapter 28 - The Call For The Chase.

Now Thorgaut and Thorbiorn and Ketil, they talk together at home there. Thorgaut says that great is the hap befallen; "and the blow has lighted nigh to me; yet meseemeth that no less may be looked for yet, and I will that there be no tiding after them."

They say both that that shall never be. The women heard what had been said, and Ketil sends them out to Frodistead and Side-mull to tell the tidings; and then might each tell the other thence-forth, till the word should come into Thwartwater-lithe, and over Northwater-dale, for men to ride after them who have wrought this deed, and so put off from them forfeits and fines.

They fare then, and take their horses and ride to Highfell to see Arni Thorgautson; he there might welcome men allied to him, for thither was come Thorarin of Thwartwater-lithe, the father of Astrid his wife: thence ride they five together.

Now it is to be told of Thormod that he fared up along south of the river till he came to the Ridge. In that time south of the river was scantily housed. There were but few folk at home there, for the men were gone to Whitewater-meads, and the house-carles were at work. Eid was sitting at the chess, and his sons with him, the one hight Illugi, the other Eystein. Thormod tells him of the tidings that have befallen. There was, in those days and long after, a bridge over the river beside Biarnisforce. Eid nowise urged the journey, but his two sons grip their weapons and take to the way. The brethren go to Thorgisl of Hewerstead, and by then was come home Eyolf his son, who had come out to Iceland that same summer.

Thormod fares up to Hallkeldstead, and comes thither and tells the tidings. Tind was the one carle at home there; but men were come thither to the stithy.

A woman dwelt next thereto who hight Thorfinna, and was called the Skald-woman; she dwelt at Thorwardstead. She had a son hight Eyolf, and a brother who hight Tanni, and was called the Handstrong, for his might was unlike the sons of men; and of like kind was Eyolf, his sister's son; full-hearted in daring they were moreover. These had come to Tind for the smithying. But for that cause folk came not to Gilsbank, that Hermund was ridden to the ship and his house-carles with him.

Tind and the others were four, and Thormod the fifth, and it was now late in the day.

The sons of Eld came to Thorgisl the Hwer, and the folk there bestir them speedily, and fare thence six in company. Eyolf, the son of Thorgisl, fared with him and four others.

Chapter 29 - The Chasing Of Bardi.

Now must it be told what tidings Bardi and his folk see. He rideth the first of them, and somewhat the hardest, so that a gate's space was betwixt him and them; but they rode after him somewhat leisurely, and said that he was wondrous fearful.

Now see they the faring of men who chase them, and that flock was not much less than they themselves had. Then were Bardi's fellows glad, and thought it good that there would be a chance of some tale to tell of their journey.

Then spake Bardi: "Fare we away yet a while, for it is not to be looked for that they will spur on the chase any the less."

Then sang Eric Wide-sight a stave:

"Now gather together the warriors renowned,
Each one of them eager-fain after the fray.
Now draweth together a folk that is fight-famed,
Apace on the heathways from out of the Southland;
But Bardi in nowise hard-counselled is bidding

The warriors fare fast and be eager in fleeing
The blast of the spear-storm that hitherward setteth,
The storm of the feeders of fight from the South."

Chapter 30 - The First Brunt Of Battle On The Heath.

Now they come face to face, Bardi and the Southern men, who now got off their horses. Bardi's folk had arrayed them athwart the ness. "Go none of you forth beyond these steps," says Bardi, "because I misdoubt me that more men are to be looked for."

The breadth of the ness went with the rank of the eighteen of them, and there was but one way of falling on them. Says Bardi: "It is most like that ye will get the trying of weapons; but better had it been to hold the northernmost fight-stead, nor had any blame been laid upon us if we had so done; and better had it been for the blood-feuds. Yet shall we not be afraid, even though we are here."

There stood they with brandished weapons. On the one hand of Bardi stood Thorberg, and on the other side Gefn's-Odd, and on the other hand of them the brethren of Bardi.

Now those Southern men, they fall not on so speedily as the others looked for, for more folk had they to face than they had wotted of. The leaders of them were Thorgaut, Thorbiorn, and Ketil. Spake Thorgaut: "Wiser it were to bide more folk of ours; much deeper in counsel have they proved, inasmuch as they came but few of them within the country-side."

Now they fall not on; and when the Northern men see that, they take to their own devices. Saith Thorberg: "Is Brusi amidst the folk perchance?" He said that he was there.

Says Thorberg: "Knowest thou perchance this sword, which here I hold?" He said that he knew not how that should be looked for. "Or who art thou?"

"Thorberg I hight," says he; "and this sword Lyng-Torfi, thy kinsman, gave to me; thereof shalt thou abide many a stroke to-day, if it be as I will. But why fall ye not on, so boldly as ye have followed on to-day, as it seemeth to me, now running, and now riding."

He answereth: "Maybe that is a sword I own; but before we part to-day thou shalt have little need to taunt us."

Then said Thorberg: "If thou art a man full-fashioned for fight, why wilt thou tarry for more odds against us?"

Then Bardi took up the word: "What are the tidings of the country-side?"

Said Ketil: "Tidings are such as shall seem good to thee, to wit, the slaying of Gisli, my brother."

Saith Bardi: "We blame it nowise; and I deemed not that my work had been done anywise doubtfully. Come! Deemest thou, Ketil, that thou and thy father have nought at all wherefor to avenge you on us. I mind me that it was but a little since thou camest home, Ketil, bearing a back burden, a gift in hand for thy father. Now if thou bearest it not in mind, here is there a token thereof, this same sword, to wit, not yet dry of the brains of him."

And he shaketh the sword at him therewith.

This they might not abide, so now they run on them. Thorbiorn leaps at Bardi, and smites him on the neck, and wondrous great was the clatter of the stroke, and it fell on that stone of the beads which had been shifted whenas he took the knife and gave it to Nial's son; and the stone brake asunder, and blood was drawn on either side of the band, but the sword did not bite.

Then said Thorbiorn: "Troll! No iron will bite on thee."

Now were they joined in battle together, and after that great stroke he (Thorbiorn) turns him forthwith to meet Thorod, and they fall to fight together; Ketil goeth against Bardi, and Thorgaut against Thorberg. There lacked not great strokes and eggings-on.

The Southlanders had the lesser folk, and the less trusty.

Now first is to be told of the dealings betwixt Bardi and Ketil. Ketil was the strongest of men and of great heart. Long they had to do together, till it came to this, that Bardi slashed into the side of him, and Ketil fell. Then leapt Bardi unto Thorgaut and gave him his death-wound, and there they both lay low before the very weapon which they owned themselves.

Now is it to be told of Thorbiorn and Thorod. They fall to in another place; and there lacked not for great strokes, which neither spared to the other, most of them being huge in sooth. But one stroke Thorod fetched at Thorbiorn, and smote off his foot at the ankle-joint; but none the less he fought on, and thrust forth his sword into Thorod's belly, so that he fell, and his gut burst out.

But Thorbiorn, seeing how it had fared with his kinsmen (namely, Ketil and Thorgaut), he heeded nought of his life amidst these maimings.

Now turn the sons of Gudbrand on Thorbiorn. He said: "Seek ye another occasion; erst it was not for young men to strive with us." Therewith he leaps at Bardi and fights with him. Then said Bardi: "What! A very troll I deem thee, whereas thou tightest with one foot off. Truer of thee is that which thou spakest to me."

"Nay," quoth Thorbiorn, "nought of trollship is it for a man to bear his wounds, and not to be so soft as to forbear warding him whiles he may. That may be accounted for manliness rather; and so shouldst thou account it, and betroll men not, whereas thou art called a true man. But this shall ye have to say hereof before I bow me in the grass, that I had the heart to make the most of weapons."

There fell he before Bardi and won a good word.

Now lacks there never onset, but it came to this at last, that the Southern men gave way.

But it is told that there was a man hight Thorliot, a great champion, who had his abode at Walls; but some say that he was of Sleybrook: he fought with Eric Wide-sight; and before they fought, Eric sang this stave:

"O warrior that reddenest the war-brand thin-whetted,
'Tis the mind of us twain to make shields meet together
In the wrath of the war-fray. O bider of Wall-stead,
Now bear we no ruth into onset of battle.
O hider of hoards of the fire that abideth
In the fetter of earth, I have heard of thine heart,
High-holden, bepraised amongst men for its stoutness;
And now is the time that we try it together."

Chapter 31 - The Second Brunt Of Battle And The Third.

Now is there somewhat of a lull; but therewith were seen six men a-riding: there were Thorgisl the Hewer, and Eyolf his son, and the sons of Eid. They see the evil plight of their folk, and that their lot was sinking much, and they were ill content therewith.

Now the sons of Gudbrand were ware that there was Eyolf, and they crave leave of Bardi to take his life and avenge them. For it had befallen, that whenas they were east-away he had thrust them from a certain gallery down into a muck-pit, and therein they had fared shamefully; so they would now avenge them; and they had made this journey with Bardi from the beginning that they might get the man.

Said Bardi: "Ye are doughty men, and of much worth, and much teen it were if ye were cast away. Still, I will see to it that your will have its way; but I will bid you go not from out the ranks." But they might not withhold themselves, and they run off to meet him eagerly, and they fall to fight. Eyolf was the greatest of champions, and a man of showy ways, like his father before him; full-fashioned of might, well proven in onslaught; and the battle betwixt them was long and hard; and suchwise it ended, that either was so wilful and eager, and so mighty of heart and hand, that they all lay dead at their parting.

Fast fought the sons of Eid withal, and go forward well and warrior-like; against them fought Stein and Steingrim, and now they all fight and do a good stroke of work; and there fall the sons of Eid, and Bardi was standing hard by, when they lost their lives.

Thorgisl the Hewer spared nought; he deemed great scathe wrought him by the death of his son. He was the mightiest man of his hands, and defter of weapons than other men. He heweth on either hand and deemeth life no better than death.

These are most named amongst the foremost herein, to wit, Thorgisl and Eric and Thorod.

Thorgisl spared him nought, and there was no man of the country who seemed to all a wayfellow of more avail than he. Thorgisl (son of Hermund, brother of Thorod) betook him to meet him; and they dealt long together, nor was either of them lacking in hardihood. Now Thorgisl (Hermundson) smites a stroke on him down his nose from the brow, and said:

"Now hast thou gotten a good mark befitting thee; and even such should more of you have."

Then spake Thorgisl (the Hewer): "Nought good is the mark; yet most like it is, that I shall have the heart to bear it manfully; little have ye yet to brag over." And he smote at him so that he fell and is now unfightworthy.

Now was there a lull for a while, and men bind their wounds.

Now is seen the riding of four men, and there was Tind and Tanni, Eyolf and Thormod; and when they came up they egg on much; and they themselves were of championship exceeding great; and battle was joined the third time.

Tanni fell on against Bardi, and there befell fight of wondrous daring.

Tanni hewed at him, and it fell out as before, that Bardi is hard to deal with, and the business betwixt them ended herewith, that Tanni fell before Bardi.

Eyolf went against Odd, and they fight, each of them the best of stout men. Now Eyolf smiteth at Odd, and it came on to his cheek and on to his mouth, and a great wound was that.

Then spake Eyolf: "Maybe the widow will think the kissing of thee worsened."

Odd answereth: "Long hath it been not over good, and now must it be much spoilt forsooth; yet it may be that thou wilt not tell thereof to thy sweetheart."

And he smote at him, so that he gat a great wound.

Here it befell as of the rest, that Bardi was standing hard by, and did him scathe.

Withal Thormod Thorgautson was a bold man, and went well forward. Eyolf of Burg fared against him, and got a sore hurt.

Now though these above said be the most named amongst the Northlanders, yet all of them fared forth well and in manly wise, whereas they had a chosen company.

So when these were fallen there was a lull in the battle. And now Thorberg spake that they should seek to get away; but eight men from the South were fallen, and three from the North. Now Bardi asks Thorod if he thought he would have the might to fare with them, and he gave out there was no hope thereof, and bids them ride off.

Now Bardi beheld his hurt, and therewithal they saw the band that now fared up from the South like a wood to look upon. So Bardi asks if they be minded to bide, but they said they would ride off; and so they did, and were now sixteen in company, and the more part of them wounded.

Chapter 32 - Bardi Puts Away His Wife.

Now it is to be told of Illugi that he cometh upon the field of deed, and seeth there things unlooked for, and great withal. Then sang Tind a song when Illugi asked how many they had been:

"The stem of the battle-craft here was upbearing
His spear-shaft with eight and with ten of the ash-trees
That bear about ever the moon of the ocean;
With us five less than thirty men were they a-fighting.
But nine of the flingers of hail of the bow,
Yea, nine of our folk unto field there have fallen,
And surely meseemeth that dead they are lying,
Those staves of the flame by the lathe that is fashioned.
"Of the North the two cravers of heirship from Eid
In the field are they fallen as seen is full clearly,
And Gudbrand's two sons they fell there moreover,
Where the din of the spear-play was mighty mid men.
But never henceforward for boot are we biding;
Unless as time weareth the vengeance befall.
Now shall true folk be holding a mind of these matters,
As of sword-motes the greatest ere fought amongst men."

Chapter 33 - The Speaking Out Of Truce.

Now they hear a great din, in that many men ride to the river. Here was come Thorgisl Arason, having journeyed from the North- country from his bridal; in his company was Snorri the Priest, and eighty men together they rode.

Then said Bardi: "Let us drop our visors, and ride we into their band, but never more than one at a time, and then they will find out nothing, seeing that it is dark."

So Bardi rideth up to Snorri the Priest, having a mask over his face, and hath talk with him while they cross the ford, and tells him the tidings. And as they ride out of the river Snorri the Priest took up the word, and said:

"Here let us bait, Thorgisl, and tarry and talk together, before we betake ourselves to quarters for the night." Bardi and his were riding beside the company, and folk heeded it not. Thorgisl was minded in the evening for Broadlairstead.

Now when they had sat down, spake Snorri: "I am told, Thorgisl," says he, "that no man can set forth as well as thou the speech of truce and other in law matters."

"That is a tale that goeth not for much," says Thorgisl.

"Nay," says Snorri, "there must be much therein, since all men speak in one way thereof."

Thorgisl answers: "Truly there is nothing in it that I deliver the speech of truce better than other men, though it may be good in law notwithstanding."

Says Snorri: "I would that thou wouldst let me hear it."

He answers: "What need is there thereof? Are any men here at enmity together?"

He said he knew nought thereof, "but this can never be a misdoing; so do as I will."

So Thorgisl said it should be so, and therewithal he fell to speaking:

"This is the beginning of our speech of truce, that God may be at peace with us all; so also shall we be men at peace between ourselves and of good accord, at ale and at eating, at meets and at man-motes, at church-goings and in king's house; and wherever the meetings of men befall, we shall be so at one as if enmity had never been between us. Knife we shall share and shorn meat, yea, and all other things between us, even as friends and not foes. Should henceforth any trespass happen amongst us, let boot be done, but no blade be reddened. But he of us who tramples on truce settled, or fights after full troth given, he shall be so far wolf-driven and chased, as men furthest follow up wolves, Christian men churches seek, heathen men their temples tend, fires flare up, earth grows green, son names a mother's name, ships sail, shields glitter, sun shines, snow wanes, Fin skates, fir groweth, a falcon flieth the springlong day with wind abaft under both his wings standing, as heaven dwindles, the world is peopled, wind waxeth, water sheds to sea, and carles sow corn.

"He shall shun churches and Christian men, God's houses and men's, and every home but hell.

"Each one of us taketh troth from the other for himself and his heirs born and unborn, begotten and not begotten, named and not named, and each one giveth in turn troth, life troth, dear troth, yea, main troth, such as ever shall hold good while mold and men be alive.

"Now are we at one, and at peace wheresoever we meet on land or on water, on ship or on snowshoe, on high seas or horseback:

"Oars to share,
Or bailing-butt,
Thoft or thole plank
If that be needful."

Chapter 34 - Snorri Tells The Whole Tale.

And when Thorgisl had done giving out the words of truce, Snorri spoke: "Have thanks, friend; right well hast thou spoken, and it is clear enough that he who trespasseth there against is truly a truce-breaker, most especially if he be here present." And now Snorri tells the tidings which had befallen, and also this, that Bardi and his men had come into the band of Thorgisl and those with him.

In that band there were many friends and close kindred of the men of the South; moreover, Thorgisl had aforetime had for wife Grima, the daughter of Halkel, and sister of Illugi the Black.

Then said Thorgisl: "For this once we might well have done without thee, Snorri."

He answers: "Say not so, good friend; troubles between men have now grown full great, though here they be stayed."

So now Thorgisl would not go against the truce which he himself had bespoken, and so folk parted asunder.

Snorri rode away with a company of twenty men to Lechmote, and Bardi and his folk were with him, and Thorarin received them well, and cheery of mood they were and bespoke their counsels.

[Here a lacuna of one leaf in the old MS. interrupts the story, which begins again when, apparently at the Althing, the affairs of Bardi were settled at law.]

Chapter 35 - Bardi's Affairs Settled.

Then stands up an old man, Eid Skeggison to wit, and said: "We like it ill that men should bandy words about here, whether it be done by our men or others; to nought good will that come, while often evil proceedeth therefrom. It behoveth men here to speak what may tend to peace. I am minded to think that not another man among us has more to miss, nor that on any, much greater grief hath been brought than on me; yet a wise counsel do I deem it to come to peace, and therefore I shall have no ruth on anyone bandying words about here. Moreover, it is most likely now, as ever, that it will only come to evil if folk will be casting words of shame at each other."

He got good cheer for his speech. And now men search about for such as be likeliest for the peacemaking. Snorri is most chiefly spoken of as seeking to bring about the peace. He was then far sunk in age. Another such was Thorgisl, the friend of Snorri, for their wives were sisters. Now both sides did it to wit that matters should be put to award, and the pairing of man to man; though erst folk had been sore of their kinsmen.

Now we know no more to tell thereof than that the fallen were paired man to man, and for the award Snorri was chosen on behalf of Bardi, together with Gudmund, the son of Eyolf, while Thorgisl, the son of Ari, and Illugi, were appointed on behalf of the Southerners. So they fell to talking over the

matter between them, as to what would most likely lead to peace. And it seemed good to them to pair men together in this wise:

The sons of Eid and the sons of Gudbrand were evened, as was also Thorod, the son of Hermund, and Thorbiorn. But now as to Hall Gudmundson, the Burgfirthers thought the mangild for him was pushed too far, so they drew off, and broke the peace; yet they knew that Bardi had set his heart on that matter. But of the close thereof this is to be told, that the sons of Thorgaut, Ketil and Gisli, were paired against Hall Gudmundson. In all there were nine lives lost of the Southerners, and now four from the North have been set off against five Gislungs; for nought else would like the kinsmen of Bardi because of the disparity of kin there was.

Then matters were talked over with both sides as to what next was most like to do. There were now four Southernmen unatoned, Thorgisl to wit, and Eyolf his son, Tanni the Handstrong, and Eyolf, his sister's son.

Now Bardi declared that he was no man of wealth any more than his brothers or their kindred, "nor do we mean to claim money in atonement on our side."

Answered Snorri: "Yet it behoveth not, that neither fine nor outlawry come about." Bardi said he would not gainsay that people should go abroad, so that they were free to come back again, nor that then all the more of them should fare. "Yet one there is who cannot fare; for him let fee be yolden, though it may hap that ye deem ye have some guilt to square with him. My fellow Gris will not be found to be bitten by guilt." Hesthofdi, who now dwells at the place called Stead in Skagafirth, who was a kinsman of his, took him in.

So matters came about, that on this they made peace, as they were most willing to agree to men faring abroad. Now this was deemed to be about the only boot to be got, since Bardi might not bite at-fines; they hoped, too, that thereby unpeace would somewhat abate, and on the other hand they deemed no less honour done to themselves by their having to be abroad. By wise men it was deemed most like to allay their rage, so great as it was, if for a while they should not be living within one and the same land.

Fourteen of the men who had had share in the Heath-slaughters were to fare abroad, and be abroad for three winters, and be free to come back in the third summer, but no money should be found for their faring.

Thus were men appeased on these matters without taking them into court. And so it was accounted that Bardi and those who came forth for his avail had had the fuller share, for as hopeless as it had seemed for a while.

Chapter 36 - Bardi Fares And Is Shipwrecked.

Now Bardi sends men into the country-side. He and his had got rid of their land and stock in case this should be the end of the matter; the which they could not surely tell beforehand. The messenger was hight Thorod, and was by-named Kegward, not beloved of folk; he was to have three winters; he was akin to the sons of Gudround, wealthy in chattels withal. And now the purchase of their lands as aforesaid was all but settled.

Now there cometh withal a ship from the high seas into the mouth of Blanda, which was the keel of Haldor, Bardi's foster-brother.

Therewithal folk came back from the Thing, and when Haldor hears that Bardi must needs go abroad, he has the freight of the craft unshipped, and brings himself, ship and all, up into the Hope over against Bardi's house, and a joyful meeting was theirs.

"Kinsman," says Haldor, "ever hast thou handled matters well as concerning me; thou hast often been bounteous to me, nor didst thou wax wrath on me when I did not go with thee on that journey of thine, so therefore I will now promise thee some avail in return, as now thou shalt hear: this ship will I give thee with yard and gear."

Bardi thanked him, saying he deemed he had done the deed of a great man. So now he dights this craft, and has with him five- and-twenty men. Somewhat late they were bound for sea; then put off to the main, and are eleven days out at sea; but in such wise their faring befell that they wreck their ship against Sigluness in the north, and goods were lost, but the men saved.

Gudmund the Elder had ridden out to Galmastrand, and heareth the tidings and hasteneth homeward. And in the evening spake Eyolf, his son: "Maybe it is Bardi yonder on the other side, that we see from here." Many said it was not unlike.

"Now how wouldst thou go about it?" says Eyolf, even he, "if it should hap that he had been driven back here?"

He answers: "What seemeth good to thee?"

He answers: "To bid them all home here to guesting. Meet were that."

Gudmund answers: "Large of mind thou, nor wot I if that be altogether so ill counselled."

Answers Eyolf, even he: "Speak thou, hailest of men! Now I can tell thee that Bardi, he and his, have been driven back, and broken to splinters against Sigluness, and have lost the best part of their goods. From this thou wilt have honour."

So he closed his mouth; but Gudmund thought he liked the matter none the better for that, yet lets him have his will.

Chapter 37 - Bardi's Abiding With Gudmund.

So Eyolf dights him for the journey, and goes with five-and- twenty horses to meet them, and happens on them on Galmastrand. He greets them well, and bids them go home with him, by the will of his father.

They did so, and there they had to themselves the second bench throughout the winter; and Gudmund was cheery to them, and did to them after the fashion of a great man and well. And that was widely rumoured.

Einar, the son of Jarnskeggi, often bids them go to his house and stay with him. And thus now they are right happy.

Now we have to bring to mind, that it was Thorarin's rede that with Bardi there were men who were of great worth and had much to fall back upon. And they now sent to the west for their moneys, being still bent on faring abroad in the summer.

Chapter 38 - Eric's Song On The Heathslayings.

Some time that winter it befell that there was one who asked Eric the Skald as to what had befallen, and how many lives had been lost. He sang:

"Famed groves of the race-course whereon the sword runneth,
All up on the Heath 'twas eleven lay dead
In the place where the lime-board, the red board of battle,
Went shivering to pieces midst din of the shields.
And thereof was the cause of the battle, that erewhile
It was Gisli fell in with his fate and his ending
In the midst of the fray of the fire of the fight:
'Gainst the wielder of wound-shaft we thrust forth the onslaught."

Chapter 39 - Bardi Goeth To Norway And Afterwards To Iceland Again.

Now Bardi's fellows took their money and made them ready for faring abroad with a goodly deal of wealth.

Bardi and his brethren sent a word to say that they will have their lands to sell them, for they deem that they are in need of chattels. But he (Thorolf Kegward) would not give up the land, and claims that the bargain should stand even as it was erst purposed. So that now they must either forego their money or slay him.

Now Eyolf (Gudmundson) says he will hand over to them as much money as the land is worth, and that he will himself see to further dealings with Eyolf of Burg, and declareth that that summer he shall have him either killed or driven out of the lands, and made himself the owner thereof.

Now Bardi buys a ship which stood up in Housewick; and then he went abroad, and Eyolf saw them off with all honour, and now, this time, they fared well, and Bardi cometh up from the main north in Thrandheim-bay into the Cheaping, and has his ship drawn up and well done to withal.

At that time King Olaf the Holy ruled over Norway, and was now at the cheaping-stead. Bardi and his fellows went before the king, and they greeted the king well, even as beseemed, "and this is the way with us, lord," says Bardi, "that we would fain be of thy winter-guests."

The king answers in this way: "We have had news of thee, Bardi," says he, "that thou art a man of great kin, a mighty man of thine hands; moreover, that ye are doughty men, that ye have fallen in with certain great deeds, and have wreaked your wrongs, yet waited long before so doing. Howbeit ye have still some ancient ways about you, and such manner of faith as goeth utterly against my mind. Now for the reason that I have clean parted from such things, our will is not to take you in; yet shall I be thy friend, Bardi," says he, "for methinks that some great things may be in store for thee. But it may often befall to those who fall in with suchlike matters, should they grow to be over-weighty to deal with, then if there be certain ancient lore blended therewith, therein are men given to trow overmuch."

Then spake Bardi: "No man there is," says he, "whom I would rather have for a friend than thee, and thanks we owe thee for thy words."

Now that winter long Bardi had his abode in the town, and all men held him of good account. But the next spring he dights his ship for Denmark, and there he was for another winter, and was well beholden withal, though tidings be not told thereof.

Thereafter he dights his ship for Iceland, and they came out upon the north of the land, and were in great straits for money.

By this time Gudmund was dead, and Eyolf came to see them and bid them come to his house, and anon each went to his own, all being now guiltless.

Eyolf gave up to Bardi and his brethren their lands inherited from their father, showing forth again his large-heartedness as before, nor was any other man such avail to them as he was.

Now Bardi betook himself to Gudbrand his brother-in-law, a wealthy man and of high kin withal, but said to be somewhat close-fisted.

But the brethren of Bardi went to Burg, the southernmost, to Eyolf their brother-in-law, and by that time their foster-mother was dead.

Now Eyolf redeemed all the land for the hand of those brothers, and buys Bardi out of his share, with chattels. And so the brothers now set up house on their father's lands, and they died there in old age -- men of avail, though not abreast with the greatness of their family; they were married both, and men are come from them.

Chapter 40 - The Second Wedding Of Bardi.

Bardi rideth to the Thing after he had been one winter here in the land. Then he wooed for himself a wife, hight Aud, daughter of Snorri the Priest, and betrothed to him she was, and the bridals were settled to be at Saelings-dale in the harvest tide, at the home of Snorri her father. It is not set forth what jointure there should go with her from home, though like enough it be that it would be a seemly portion. She was a right stirring woman and much beloved by Snorri. Her mother was Thurid, the daughter of Illugi the Red.

Bardi rides after the Thing to Waterdale to his alliances, being now well content with his journey and having good honour of men. And things turned out even as wise men had foreseen, that the peace amongst men was well holden, even as it had been framed erst, nor telleth the tale that aught of dealings they had further together.

Now Snorri dights the bridals in the harvest tide as had been settled, and a great multitude of folk gathered there; bravely the banquet turned out as might be looked for, and there Bardi and his wife tarry the winter long. But in the spring they get them away with all their belongings, and as good friends they parted, Snorri and Bardi.

Now Bardi goeth north to Waterdale, where he tarrieth with Gudbrand his brother-in-law. And in the following spring he dighteth a journey of his, and buyeth a ship and goeth abroad, and his wife with him. The tale telleth that the journey sped well with him, and he hove in from the main up against Halogaland, where the next winter long he dwelt in Thiotta with Svein, son of Harek, being well accounted of, for men deemed they saw in him the tokens of a great man; so Svein held him dear, both him and his wife withal.

Chapter 41 - The End Of Bardi.

So it befell one morning, as they were both together in their sleeping loft, away from other folk, that Bardi would sleep on, but she would be rousing him, and so she took a small pillow and cast it into his face as if for sport. He threw it back again from him; and so this went on sundry times. And at last he cast it at her and let his hand go with it. She was wroth thereat, and having gotten a stone she throweth it at him in turn.

So that day, when drinking was at an end, Bardi riseth to his feet, and nameth witnesses for himself, and declareth that he is parted from Aud, saying that he will take masterful ways no more from her than from anyone else. And so fast was he set in this mind herein, that to bring words to bear was of no avail.

So their goods were divided between them, and Bardi went his ways next spring, and made no stay in his journey till he cometh into Garthrealm, where he taketh warrior's wages, and becometh one of the Vaerings, and all the Northmen held him of great account, and had him for a bosom-friend amongst themselves.

Always, when that king's realm was to be warded, he is on the ways of war, gaining good renown from his valiance, so that he has about him always a great company of men. There Bardi spent three winters, being much honoured by the king and all the Vaerings. But once it befell, as they were out on their war- galleys with an host and warded the king's realm, that there fell an host upon them; there make they a great battle, and many of the king's men fell, as they had to struggle against an overwhelming force, though ere they fell they wrought many a big deed; and therewithal fell Bardi amidst good renown, having used his weapons after the fashion of a valiant man unto death.

Aud was married again to a mighty man, the son of Thorir Hound, who was hight Sigurd. And thence are sprung the men of Birchisle, the most renowned among men.

And there endeth this story.