

attested by *Sturlunga Saga*. Here we are told that when Sturla visited King Magnus' court at Bergen in 1263 the king received him coldly, but afterwards allowed him to accompany the royal party on a voyage to the south of Norway. In the evening one of the sailors asked if there was anyone among them who could tell stories, but he received no answer. He turned to Sturla, "Sturla, the Icelander, will you entertain us?" "Willingly," said Sturla. Then he related the story of Huld¹ better and with much more detail than any of those present had ever heard it told before. Then many men made their way to the deck so as to hear as clearly as possible, and there was a great crowd there. The queen asked: "What is that crowd on the deck?" A man answered, "Men who are listening to the tale the Icelander is telling." "What story is that?" she asked. "It is about a great giantess; it is a good story and well told." On the following day the queen sent for Sturla and asked him to come and bring with him the saga of the giantess.² So Sturla went aft to the quarterdeck and told the story over again. When he had finished, the queen and many of the listeners thanked him and took him to be a learned and wise man.³

A much earlier reference to the recitation, and indeed the composition of sagas is found in *Thorgils Saga ok Hafliða*, in which there is an account of a wedding-feast at Reykholar in 1119:

"There was fun and merriment and great festivity, and

¹ This was probably something in the nature of a fairy-tale like the *Huldre-eventyr* of modern Norway. We may refer to the story of the witch Huldre given in *Ynglinga Saga* (ch. 16), and to the supernatural being Holda or Holle in German folk-lore.

² "hafa með sér trollkonu-söguna." From these words Finnur Jónsson (*op. cit.*, II., p. 792) concludes that Sturla possessed a written copy of the saga.

³ *Sturlunga Saga*, II., pp. 270-271.