

needed trained men, seamen, and fighters, and we might even without express evidence be sure that every small folk-king and nobleman kept up as large and well-equipped a *comitatus* as he could support.

The character of the people of the west coast of Norway about the end of the eighth century is illustrated in some measure by certain poems in the Eddic collection, which we take to be of earlier date than the rest, and which, unlike the rest, bear pretty plain marks of Norwegian origin. From these it is possible to get a picture of the population whence the Wicking emigrant came; it is of a type which we pride ourselves upon as essentially British—a sturdy, thrifty, hard-working, law-loving people, fond of good cheer and strong drink, of shrewd, blunt speech, and a stubborn reticence when speech would be useless or foolish; a people clean-living, faithful to friend and kinsman, truthful, hospitable, liking to make a fair show, but not vain or boastful; a people with perhaps little play of fancy or great range of thought, but cool-thinking, resolute, determined, able to realise the plainer facts of life clearly and even deeply. Of course some of these characteristics are those common to other nations in their rank of development, but taken together they show a character such as no other race of that day could probably claim, and enable us to understand how that quiet storage of force had gone on which, when released, was capable of such results, as the succeeding three centuries witnessed with amazement. The following proverbs in verse are