

the elements of the finer arts and crafts, by which, if by anything, a race is judged. He was law-abiding, beyond most; intelligent and ready to learn, so that the story of captive Greece capturing her conquerors was often repeated, when the sea-rover settled in Ireland, or England, or France. He was, in a word, the man who deserved a hearing and who made himself heard. And if he knew nothing as yet of the faith in which Columba and Bede had so beautifully spent their lives, he was, in higher moments, by no means a soulless savage. In one of the Edda songs, *Hyndluljóð*, there is a verse which we may fancy was sung to himself by many a young adventurer, as the boat tossed in the breakers in sight of white cliffs and the unknown fate in store:—

Victory He giveth, and wealth—at His will;
 Wisdom and words—they may win them who can:
 As He gives the boat breeze so He gives the skald skill,
 But to each giveth Odin the heart of a man.

Now it was some twenty years after the outbreak of the Saxon war (p. 58) and seven years or more after the attacks of “wicked men” on the Channel coasts, that we have the first serious incident of the Viking Age, the sack of Lindisfarne, in January, 793. It was heralded by storms, lightnings and “fiery dragons in the air” (*i. e.* aurora borealis). Symeon of Durham pauses in his rapid *History of the Kings* to describe the island with its curious sands and tides, and the noble monastery once ruled by St. Cuthbert, and then paints at length the landing of the Gentiles like wolves, slaying flocks and herds, priests and Levites, monks and