

Harken to me, good men, wives, maidens and all men, of a tale that I will tell to whoever would like to stay and hear it. The tale is of Havelok, who was so poor in his youth that he went about naked. When grown, he was a stalwart man, good in every troop, the bravest at need that might ride a steed. So that you can now hear the tale and learn, at the beginning of our story fill me a cup of good ale and, before starting, I will drink a prayer that Christ shield us all from hell and always show us the way to come to Him. Let us praise the Lord!

Long ago, there was a king who made and upheld good laws. He was loved for his good works by all: earls and barons, thanes, knights, bondmen, swains, widows, maidens, priests and clerks. He loved God and the Holy Church with all his might, and truth and justice. He loved all righteous men and had them called from all over. He brought down accusers and betrayers, whom he hated as man does gall; he bound all the outlaws and thieves he could find, and no amount of bribery could save them from the gallows tree. In those days, a man who carried red gold on his back in a bag of any sort had no fear of insult or assault. Chapmen were free to travel throughout England with their wares and transact business wherever they liked; in town and country anyone who did them shame were soon brought to poverty and grief.¹ England was at ease, and a king who held his land in such security is to be highly praised; Christ of heaven was with him, England's flower.

No one dared to bring hunger or evil on his people. When he pursued his foes, he made them creep into corners; they hid themselves, kept still and did all he willed. He loved right above all things; no man could bring him to do wrong for silver or gold, and thus he held his soul safe. He protected orphans and brought to justice anyone who harmed them, whether it was cleric or knight. There was no knight so strong who was not cast in fetters for wronging a widow, and anyone who shamed a maiden's body or reputation, unless it was by her will, was soon castrated.

He was the best knight at need that ever might ride on a steed, wield a weapon or lead an army. He had no fear of any knight, but sprang forth like a spark of ember to show his skill at arms. He either took his foe's horse or armor, or made him raise his hands and loudly cry "Mercy!" He was generous and not at all stingy; the food on his table was never too good to share with the poor who came on foot, for the love of Christ, who can guide all.

The king's name was Athelwold; he was bold of word and weapon, and no one before him in England had held the land more justly. His only heir was a fair maiden, too young to walk or talk. When he became seriously ill and knew that death was coming, he asked Christ for help in deciding what to do with his daughter:

"Lord, what shall I do? I know full well I have my reward; what will become of my daughter now? I care nothing about myself, but I am very worried about her and she is greatly in my thought. It is no wonder, since she can't speak or walk. If she could ride a horse and have a thousand men by her side, be of age, able to govern England and its people as she pleases, and take care of herself, I would be happy even if I were in heaven."

He sent writs calling for all his earls and barons, rich and poor, from Roxbury to Dover to come quickly to where he lay sad and ill, bound so fast by sickness that he could not rest, eat, or find comfort. No one could cure him, so death was sure. Everyone who received a writ went to him sorrowfully, wringing their hands and weeping, and they prayed that Christ would cure him of his terrible illness. When they entered the hall at Winchester where the king lay, he welcomed them and thanked them for coming. They mourned and lamented, but Athelwold asked them to be still, for he was dying, and crying would not help.

"But now that you see I shall die, I ask you to think of my daughter, who will govern you after me. Who can take care of her and England until she comes of age and can take care of herself and rule?" They soon said, by Christ and St John, that Godrich, the Earl of Cornwall, was a true man, wise in counsel and deed, and feared by men. He would be the best to care for her until she became queen.

The king was pleased with that advice and brought a fair cloth on which he laid a missal, chalice, paten, and other items needed for mass. He made the earl swear on these that he would take care of the king's daughter well, without fault or reproach until she was twelve years old, bold of speech, educated in the ways of courtesy and courtship, and able to love a man she thought worthy. The earl was to give her the best, fairest and strongest man alive, to which

he swore on the mass book. Then he was to place England into her hands. When that was sworn, the king handed over his daughter and all the property he possessed, all of England, to the earl, and prayed that he should take care of her well.

The king could do no more but pray for God's mercy, and he received the sacrament and was shriven many times. He was scourged and beaten by hand, so that blood ran on his tender flesh. He made his will and soon gave away all his possessions. His chests and coffers throughout England were so empty that a winding sheet could not be found for his shroud. When he had been scourged, shriven and beaten often, he commended himself to God and began to call to Christ while he could still speak, and died before all his nobles. There was sobbing, sighing and grief, hand-wringing and hair-pulling. Everyone wept bitterly and felt great sorrow: rich and poor, ladies in chamber and knights in hall. When their sorrow was somewhat lessened and they had wept a long time, bells were rung and monks and priests sang mass. They read many psalters that God himself should lead Athelwold's soul to His Son in heaven, and live there eternally.

When the king had been buried, the rich earl took possession of all England. He placed knights he could trust in castles and made all the English swear to hold him in good faith. He gave whatever he thought good to men for as long as they lived, until the king's daughter was more than twenty years old. When all earls and barons, knights, freemen and serfs had sworn an oath of fealty, he appointed new justices to travel throughout England from Dover to Roxbury, as well as sheriffs, beadles and other officials, and peace officers with long lances to protect woods and paths from evil men who would cause harm. All were subject to his will and at his mercy so that no one, not earl, baron, knight or swain, dared go against him. He had plenty of subjects, weapons and possessions, and in little time all of England held him in awe and fear, as the ox fears the goad.

The king's daughter grew into a beautiful woman, the fairest alive, wise in all good and valuable manners. She was called Goldeboru, and many a tear was shed for her. When Earl Godrich heard of her wisdom, chastity and beauty, and knew that she was the rightful heir of England, he began to sigh and said:

“Should she be queen and lady over me, and have me and mine in her hand? Curse whoever allows it! She shall never have it. Should I give England to a fool, a serving girl, though she desires it? Curse evermore whoever gives it to her while I live! She has grown too proud, with good food and noble clothes that I have given her too often. I have raised her too soft. It won't be as she thinks; hope often deceives the foolish. I have a fair son who will have all England and be king and lord, as I hope to live!”

By planning this treason, he broke his oath to the king and gave not a straw. Before he would eat any food, he had Goldeboru brought from Winchester and, like the traitor Judas, had her sent to Dover, that stands on the seashore. She was poorly fed and clothed, and the castle was guarded so that she could see no one, and none of her friends could speak with her who might avenge her trouble. We shall now leave Goldeboru where she lies in prison, constantly weeping. Jesus Christ, who brought Lazarus back to life from death, may He loosen her with His hands and allow her to see hanging from the gallows tree the one who has brought her such sorrow though she has done no misdeed.

In that time there was a rich king of Denmark named Birkabeyn, who had many knights and swains. He was fair, brave and strong, the best knight that might ever lead an army, ride a steed, or handle a spear. He had three children, whom he loved as his life: a son and two fair daughters. Death, who spares no one, rich or poor, king or emperor, took him when he most wished to live. But his days were completed and he could live no longer, not for gold, silver or any gift.

When he knew death was coming, he quickly sent for priests from far and near, canons and monks to guide him and to give him the sacraments and shrive him while he still lived. When that was done and his will executed, he seated his knights to seek their advice on how to protect his young children until they could speak and walk, and ride a horse with knights and swains by their side. The knights conferred and soon chose Godard, a rich man they believed to be true, the king's own friend. They said that if he would agree, he would be the best to take care of the king's

son until he could lead an army with a strong spear in his hand, and become king of Denmark. Birkabeyn trusted his nobles' advice and laid his hands on Godard and said:

"I commit to you all three of my children, all Denmark and my property until my son comes of age, provided that you swear on the altar and mass objects, the bells that men ring, and the missal, that you will take good care of my children in a way that will fully please their kinsmen until my son becomes a knight. Then deliver to him Denmark and all that belongs to it, as is his right: its castles, towns, woods and fields. Godard stepped forward and swore to all that the king asked and then sat by the knights, who were all weeping for the king, who died soon. Jesus Christ, who makes the moon shine in the dark night, save his soul from the pains of hell and allow it to live in heaven with God's Son.

When Birkabeyn had been laid in the grave, the earl took the heir, Havelok, and his sisters, Swanborow and Helfled, and locked them in the castle, where none of their kin could come. Havelok often cried from hunger and cold before he was three years old. Godard cared nothing about his oath and gave them wretched clothes, food and bedding. He was surely the greatest traitor under God except wicked Judas. May he be cursed by all who can speak: patriarch, pope, priest, monks and hermits, and the dear holy cross on which God Himself ran with blood. Christ curse him! When he had all the land and people subject to his will and sworn to obey him, he devised a strong treachery and felony regarding the children. May the devil take him! His plans made, Godard went to the tower where the children were confined, crying from hunger and cold. The boy, who was rather bold, knelt before Godard and greeted him courteously. Godard asked him, "What is wrong with you? Why are you crying now?"

"Because we are terribly hungry," Havelok replied. "We would have more to eat. We have no one to give us drink or food; we have only half what we must eat. Woe that we were born! Is there no grain for making bread? We are nearly dead from hunger!" Godard cared nothing about their suffering, but took the two sickly girls as though he would play with them and cut their throats and carved them into pieces. Whoever saw it felt sorrow for the children lying sprawled in the blood. Havelok was in dread as Godard held the knife to the innocent little boy's heart. But he knelt before that Judas and cried for mercy:

"I will give you all of Denmark if you promise to let me live. I will swear on the book that I will never bear shield, spear or any other weapon against you. Have mercy on me! I will flee from Denmark today and never return, and swear that I was not begotten of Birkabeyn." When the devil heard this, he began to feel pity for Havelok and withdrew the knife that was warm with the innocent children's blood. It was a miracle that he did not kill Havelok, but withdrew out of pity. He wanted him dead, but not by his own hand, the foul fiend! He stood staring wildly and thought:

"If I let him live, he may cause me much trouble. I'll have no peace, for he may wait to kill me. If he were dead and my children thrive, they might be lords of Denmark after me. By God, he shall be dead; I will have it no other way! I shall have him cast into the sea and drowned, with an anchor around his neck so that he won't float." He sent for a fisherman who he knew would do what he asked, and said to the man:

"Grim, you know you are my serf. Will you do all I ask of you? Tomorrow I will make you free and rich. Take this child, and tonight when you see the moonlight throw him into the sea; I will take the sin upon myself." Grim took the child and tied him tightly with strong line, which was very painful. Jesus Christ, who made the lame walk and the dumb speak, avenge Havelok of Godard! Havelok was bound fast, wound up in an old cloth, gagged with filthy rags so that he couldn't speak or breathe and Grim could lead him to the sea and drown him as he had promised the traitor. He put Havelok in a dirty sack and carried him on his back to his cottage. He handed Havelok over to his wife, Leve, and told her:

"Guard this boy as though you were guarding my life. I will drown him in the sea, and my lord has promised me that we will be made free and have gold and other property." When Leve heard that, she got up and threw the boy down so hard that he cracked his head on a stone. Havelok regretted that he was the son of a king and that there was

no vulture, eagle, lion, wolf, bear or other beast to harm Godard. So he lay until the middle of the night when Grim told Leve to bring light so that he could get dressed:

“Do you think nothing of the oaths I have sworn to my lord? I must keep them or be lost, so I will take the boy to the sea and drown him, as you know it behooves me. Get up quickly, blow the fire and light a candle.” As Leve was about ready to prepare his clothes and tend the fire, she saw a light as bright as day shining around Havelok where he lay. A ray like a sunbeam came from his mouth, as bright as though candles were burning.

“Jesus Christ,” said Leve, “what is this light? Get up Grim, to see what it means.” They jumped up to the boy (for good will is in man’s nature). Grim ungagged and untied him, and when he pulled back Havelok’s shirt he found the birthmark of a king on his right shoulder.

“By God, this is our heir who should be lord of Denmark!” Grim told Leve. “He will be a strong, brave king of both Denmark and England. He will cause Godard much woe: hanging, flaying, or burying him alive, without mercy.” Grim knelt at Havelok’s feet, crying:

“Lord, have mercy on me and Leve. We are both your servants in bond. Lord, we shall feed you well until you can ride on a steed, wear a helm, and bear shield and spear. Godard, that traitor, will never know. I shall never be a freeman except through you; I will take care of you, and you will make me free.”

Havelok was glad, and sat up and asked for bread: “I am nearly dead from hunger, the bonds on my hands, and the gag that was so tight I nearly strangled.”

“By God,” said Leve, “I will fetch you bread and cheese, butter and milk, pasties and flans. We will soon feed you well with such food in your great need. It is true, as men say and swear, ‘Where God will help, there is no harm.’” When she brought the food, Havelok ate heartily and was happy. He couldn’t hide his hunger for he hadn’t eaten in three days. He ate a loaf and more, and when he was fed, Grim made him a fair bed, undressed him and put him in it, and wished him good sleep without worry: “Have much happiness and no fear; you are brought from sorrow to joy!”

As soon as it was daylight, Grim went to see the wicked traitor Godard, steward of Denmark. “Lord, I have done as you asked with the boy. He is drowned in the sea with an anchor around his neck; without doubt he is dead and will nevermore eat bread. Give me gold and other property so that I will be rich, and make me free with a charter as you promised the last time I spoke with you.” Godard stood and looked at him grimly with piercing eyes and said:

“Would you be an earl? Go home quickly, foul slave, and remain a thrall as you have always been. You will have no other reward, and I will easily take you to the gallows for the evil deed you have done if you stand here too long.” Grim ran, afraid he stayed too late and wondered what he should do:

“If Godard knows the boy is alive, he will hang us both. It is better to flee the land and save both our lives and those of my children and wife.” He sold all he owned of value: grain, woolly sheep, cattle, horses, swine, goats, geese and hens, and turned the proceeds into cash. He prepared his boat for a voyage; it was sealed with tar and outfitted with a good mast, strong fast cables, good oars and sail, and lacked not a nail that it needed. He placed his three sons, two daughters, his wife and Havelok in it, laid in an oar, and headed for the high sea. When they were but a mile from land the wind began to rise out of the north and drove them to England, which would be Havelok’s. But first he would have much shame, sorrow and pain, yet he got it all, as you will learn if you are willing to listen.

Grim landed in Humber, at the north end of the district of Lindsey. The ship sat on the sand, but Grim drew it onto the land, and he built a small cottage for his group. He made a little house of earth so that they were well protected. Because Grim lived there, the place was called Grimsby and will be until doomsday.

Grim was an excellent fisherman and caught many good fish, both with net and hook. He took sturgeon, turbot, salmon, eel, cod, porpoise, seal and whale, flounder, herring, mackerel, halibut and many others. He made good baskets, one for himself, and one for each of his sons for carrying the fish to sell and trade. He went to every town and farm with his wares, and never came home empty-handed without bread and grain; his work was not wasted. When he caught the great lamprey, he knew the way to the borough of Lincoln. He went through the town until he sold everything and counted his pennies. They were happy when he came home, bringing fine breads and meat of cattle, sheep and swine, as well as hemp to make strong ropes for the nets he set. In this way, Grim fed his household well for twelve years or more.

Havelok was aware that he lay at home while Grim worked hard to feed him. "I am no longer a boy," he thought. "I am grown and may eat more than Grim can get; by God, I eat more than Grim and his five children! This cannot go on. I will go with them to learn how to be useful and work for my food. There is no shame in working; to eat and drink without working is wrong. God reward him who has fed me to this day! I will gladly bear baskets, which will not harm me even if the burden they contain is as heavy as an ox. I will no longer stay at home, but hurry forth tomorrow." The next day he got up early and cast on his back a basket full of as many fish as the other four men carried combined. He sold well and brought home all the money he earned, down to the last farthing and held nothing back. Havelok worked every day to learn his trade.

A strong dearth of grain began to rise, and Grim's fishing failed. He was worried about feeding his family, most of all Havelok, who required so much. He told the boy, "Dear son, we may die of hunger, the famine is so bad, and our stores are gone. It will be better if you leave here and go to Lincoln; you know the way well and have been through it often. I am of no use to you, and there are many good men in town and you may be able to earn your food there. But I am worried that you are so poorly clothed; I'll make you something to wear out of my sail, so that you don't catch cold."

Grim took the shears off the peg and made a garment from the sail, which Havelok quickly put on; he had no shoes or socks, so he went to Lincoln barefoot. He was bewildered when he got there, with no friends to go to. He went two days without eating because he could find no one to feed him for his work. On the third day, he heard the call "Porters! Porters!" Men sprang forth like embers from a fire, but Havelok shoved nine or ten into the fen and jumped towards the cook who brought the food he had bought to the bridge. Havelok left the porters lying in the mud and carried the food to the castle and got a farthing cake in reward.

The next day he watched for the earl's cook until he saw him on the bridge with many fish he had bought for the Earl of Cornwall. Havelok was happy to hear him call "Porters! Porters!" and pushed at least sixteen young men standing in his way into a heap as he leapt towards the cook. He filled the basket with a cartload of fish and hurried to the castle, where men helped him set down his burden. The cook laughed and thought him a stalwart man, and offered him a job: "Will you work with me? I will gladly feed you, for your food and pay will be well invested."

"By God, dear sir," said Havelok, "I ask for no other wage than having enough to eat. I will fetch firewood and water, and kindle and make a good bright fire; I can skin eels, wash dishes and do all that you want."

"That is plenty," answered the cook. "Go sit over there and I will give you good bread and make you a broth. Sit down now and eat heartily. Cursed be he who denies you food!" Havelok sat still as a stone until he had eaten his fill, and when finished he drew water from the well and filled a tub which he carried by himself to the kitchen. He wanted no help to carry the food from the bridge, collect materials for the fire, or any of his other tasks. He worked without rest, more than if he were a beast.

He was meek and good natured, able to hide his sorrow. He could not refuse any child who wanted to play with him, and he was loved by all who saw him, young and old, shy and bold, knights, and men both noble and humble. Word spread of Havelok's humility, strength, and fair appearance except that he was nearly naked but for a foul cloak. The cook felt sorry for him and bought him new clothes, shoes and socks. When Havelok put them on, there was never a man who seemed so fit to be a king or emperor.

When games were played at Lincoln and all the earls' men were there, Havelok was taller by a shoulder than the largest of them and stood over them like a mast. There was no one in England to match his strength, and in wrestling there was no man he didn't soon throw down. He was as gentle as he was strong; though a man might mistreat him, he never slandered or harmed anyone. He had not yet been with a woman, in play or in desire, and he would no sooner lie with a whore than he would a hag.

At that time, Earl Godrich governed England, and he summoned many earls and barons to the town for a parliament, many of whom brought champions and lads with them. It happened that young men, around nine or ten years old, began to play, which gathered quite a crowd; men of all kinds from the town, champions and strong lads, peasants with their goads come from the plow, and stableboys from duty all came to see the sport of stone casting. The stone was huge and as heavy as an ox; an extremely strong man might lift it to his knee, and there was neither a cleric nor priest who might lift it to his chest! The champions that came with the barons each threw the stone, and whoever cast it farther than the others an inch or more was considered champion, whether young or old. The champions and lads stood and watched, and argued over who made the best throw.

Havelok also watched, and he was completely ignorant about the sport, which he had never seen or played. His master told him to join the contest to see how he might do, but Havelok was afraid. He picked up the stone, and his first cast passed the others by at least twelve feet. The champions who saw the throw nudged each other, laughed, and gave up the game, saying "We stay here too long."

Havelok's amazing feat could not be hidden and was soon made known. Throughout England there was talk of Havelok's stature and strength, and his humility. Godrich heard the knights in the castle hall discussing Havelok, and thought how he could use him:

"Through this young man I will have England, as will my son after me. King Athelwold made me swear on the book that I should give his daughter to the highest,² the best, the fairest and the strongest man alive. Where will I find anyone as high, skillful, fair and strong as Havelok, though I searched to India? Havelok is the man who shall have Goldeboru!" He made this plan with treachery, treason and felony, for he believed that Havelok was only some churl's son and would never have a single furrow of England with Goldeboru, the king's heir, who was good and fair. Since Havelok was a thrall, Godrich would have all of England, which was Goldeboru's right.³ He was worse than Satan and deserved hanging!

Godrich brought Goldeboru to Lincoln, with bells ringing and much joy, but he was full of treachery. He told her he was going to give her to the fairest man alive, but she answered that by Christ and St John she would marry or bring no man into her bed unless he was a king or a king's heir, no matter how handsome he was. Her oath made the earl furious, who said:

"Would you be queen and lady over me? You will have no one but a common fellow, my cook's knave, not a king. Curse anyone who gives you another while I live! Tomorrow you will be wedded and bedded, despite you." Goldeboru cried and grieved and wished she were dead.

In the morning when the church bell rang, Godrich, that Judas worse than Satan, sent for Havelok and asked if he would take a wife.

"Not on my life. What would I do with a wife? I can't feed or clothe her, and where would I take her? I have nothing: no house or cottage, nothing to make a fire, no bread or food to go with it, no cloth. The clothes I have on belong to the cook, and I am his knave." Godrich beat him with hard, strong strokes and threatened to hang him or poke out his eyes if he would not take the mate given him. Alone and afraid, Havelok granted Godrich's bidding.

Then Godrich, the traitor, sent for Goldeboru, the most beautiful woman under the moon, and told her to take Havelok or "I shall banish you out of the land, or you shall run to the gallows and be burned in a fire!" She was so afraid that she dared not refuse the marriage. Although she disliked it, she thought it was the will of God, who makes the grain

grow and formed women to be born. When Godrich had forced them through fear into agreement that Havelok should marry and maintain Goldeboru, and that she should be loyal to him, there were pennies in plenty placed upon the missal; he took hers, and she his.⁴ They were married properly, with the mass led by the Archbishop of York, who had come to the parliament as though God had sent him there.

When they were married, they didn't know what to do, where to live, or where to go. They could not live there long, for they knew Godrich hated them, and Havelok feared that men might bring his lover shame or ill repute, and he would rather be dead. So Havelok decided that their best situation would be found with Grim and his three sons, where they would find clothing and food. They had to walk, and held the right way to Grimsby. When they arrived, Grim had died but all five of his children were alive, and they received Havelok and Goldeboru with much joy. They had remained loyal to Havelok, and knelt before him in greeting:

“Welcome, dear lord and your fair mate. Blessed be the time that you took her in God's law. We are happy to see you alive and are yours to buy and sell if you dwell here. Lord, we have many goods: horses, oxen, sheep and swine, and a ship, gold and silver and much else that our father gave us, and he instructed us to give you gold, silver and property. Stay here, lord, and all will be yours. You will be our lord and sire, and we will serve you both, and our sisters will do all our mistress asks; they will wash her clothes, bring water for washing her hands, and prepare you both for bed, for we wish her to be our lady.” They happily started the fire for a meal, at which no good food was spared; goose, hen, duck and drake were in plenty. There was wine and ale, and they drank the toast to health many times.

At night as Goldeboru lay full of sorrow as always over the betrayal of having been given to a man beneath her rank, she saw a very bright and beautiful light blazing like fire in the room. She looked everywhere and saw it coming out of Havelok's mouth, who was lying next to her in bed. No wonder she was afraid! She thought about its meaning, and believed that Havelok would become a nobleman before he died. She saw a golden cross on his shoulder, and heard an angel's voice:

“Goldeboru, let go of your sorrow, for your spouse, Havelok, is a king's son and heir, as the cross on his shoulder symbolizes. It also betokens that he will be king of England and Denmark, which you will see, and you will be queen and lady.” When she had heard the voice of the angel out of heaven, she was so happy that she couldn't hide her joy and kissed Havelok, but he was asleep and didn't know what the angel had said. He awoke suddenly and asked Goldeboru if she was asleep, for he had just had a wondrous dream.

“I thought I was in Denmark, on one of the largest hills I've ever seen. It was so high that I could see all the world. As I sat on the hill, I began to hold Denmark, its towns and strong castles, and my arms were so long that I took all of Denmark in them. When I drew my arms to me, everything in Denmark clung tightly to them; the strong castles began to fall on their knees and the keys fell at my feet.

“I had another dream, that I flew over the sea to England, with all who ever lived in Denmark except bondmen and their wives. When I came to England, I closed it in my hand and gave it to you. God! My love, what can this mean?”

Goldeboru answered, “May Jesus Christ, who made the moon, turn your dreams into joy! You will bear the crown of England, and Denmark will kneel at your feet; you will win all its castles, my dearest. I know it as well as if I saw it. Everyone who lives in Denmark, noble and humble, will come to you: uncle and brother, father and son, earl and baron, vassal and thane, knights, burgesses and swains. You will be made king solemnly and properly within the first year, and all of Denmark shall be yours, have no doubt. But I advise that we both go to Denmark without delay, for speed and success are fellows. I will never be happy until I see Denmark, for I know that all the land will be yours. Ask Grim's three sons to go with you, which they will do eagerly, for they love you dearly and will serve you wherever they are, as long as they live. Have them get the ship ready and be sure not to tarry; delay has often wrought harm.”

When Havelok heard her counsel, as soon as it was day he got dressed and went to church before he did anything else. He knelt before the cross and called on Christ:

“Lord that rules all, wind and water, woods and fields, have mercy on me and avenge me on my foe, who I saw slay my sisters with a knife and would have taken my life by having Grim drown me in the sea. He holds my land with no right and has brought me much grief, though I never wronged him. He has caused me to beg for food and often lie in pain and sorrow. Lord, have mercy on me and let me cross the sea without storms in which I would drown and without becoming lost, and bring me to the land that Godard holds in his hand, all of which is my right, as you know well.” When he had finished praying and laid his offering on the altar, he took leave of Jesus and His sweet Mother and left weeping.

When Havelok came home, Grim’s sons were ready to go fishing for Havelok’s food, but Havelok had a different plan. First he called the oldest brother, Robert the Red, then William Winduth and Hugh Raven and said:

“Sirs, listen to me while I tell you something about myself that you already know. My father was king of Denmark and held all the land in his hand when he died. But he received evil advice and gave me, my sisters, Denmark, and all his wealth into the keeping of a foul fiend who killed my sisters with his own hand. He slit their throats and then cut them into pieces; he then told your father to drown me, and swore that he would take on the sin. But Grim was wise and not willing to lose his soul. He would rather break an oath than drown me and be lost, so he fled with me from Denmark to save me, for if I had been found alive nothing would have saved him from being slain, not gold or property. He left Denmark and always kept me well fed and fostered.

“But now that I am of the age when I can wield weapons and give strong strokes, I will never be glad while I live until I see Denmark. I pray that you will go with me, and I may make you rich. Each of you will have ten castles and the land that belongs to them: towns, woods and fields.”

The brothers agreed and went to Denmark with Havelok.⁵ Once there, Havelok, Robert and William disguised themselves as merchants and went to the justiciar, Ubbe, for permission to travel from town to town to seek their wares. Havelok gave Ubbe an exceedingly valuable gold ring, more expensive than ever sold by merchants, to gain Ubbe’s favor.⁶ When Ubbe had the ring he would not have given it up for anything. He looked at Havelok, and seeing his broad well-shaped shoulders, wide chest and tall body, he wondered why he was not a knight rather than a merchant: “He is better suited to bear a helm, shield and spear than to buy and sell wares. Alas that he shall do so! By God, if he believes me, he will give up trading!”

Despite his opinion, Ubbe agreed: “Havelok, I grant your request, and I advise that you and your fair wife, whom you love as your life, come and eat with me today. Have no fear, no man shall bring her shame; I will be the guarantor, by the faith I owe you.” Havelok feared for Goldeboru’s safety; he would rather lose his life than have her suffer any blame or shame. Nevertheless, he accepted the invitation, and Ubbe spurred his horse to leave but at the last said in front of his folk: “Be sure to come, for I wish and advise it.”

Although he was worried, Havelok dared not refuse Ubbe’s invitation, so he took his wife with him to the high court. She was led by Robert, who would have given his life before allowing anyone to insult or injure her, and by William, who was good at all need. These men had been raised well! When they arrived at the hall, Ubbe and his men got up to meet them; many knights and servants wanted to inspect them. Havelok stood like a hill among them, a head taller than anyone there. When Ubbe saw how handsome and gracious Havelok was, his heart went to him and his wife and he loved them as much as own life, and more than anyone else in Denmark. See how God can help wife and man in many ways!

When it was time to eat, Ubbe brought in his wife and playfully suggested that she and Havelok eat together, and he would sit with Goldeboru, the most beautiful woman in Denmark. When they were seated, the table set and grace said, they were served the best food that king or emperor would eat: cranes, swans, venison, salmon, lampreys and sturgeon, and plenty of fine wine. But to dwell on the food would be a long and annoying story, fair listeners.

When the meal had been shared and many toasts made, it was time for the guests to leave. Ubbe was concerned about the safety of Havelok and his small group, since many men would kill to have Goldeboru. So he sent them to the home of Bernard Brun, the best man in the town, with an escort of ten knights and sixty well-armed men. Bernard was true and stalwart and could keep Havelok and his family safe until daylight. He gladly received his guests and prepared a rich supper.

As they sat down to eat, a lad who had sixty strong men with him, all with drawn swords and knives, ordered Bernard to open the door and let them in. Bernard jumped up, put on a coat of mail, grabbed an axe and leapt to the door as if mad and answered:

“Who is it out there that starts a confrontation? Go away quickly, foul thieves,⁷ for by the Lord if I open the door, I will kill some of you and the others I will fasten in fetters!”

The lad replied, “Do you think we are afraid? We will quickly come in the door despite you, churl.” The attacker gripped and threw a huge stone so hard that it shattered the door. Havelok rushed and grabbed the enormous door bar, threw the door open wide, and said:

“Here I stand. Come quickly to me, and curse any who flee!” One rushed at Havelok with an outdrawn sword, and with him came two other men. Havelok lifted up the door bar and killed all three with one blow, so that their brains lay out against the stars. He hit the fourth attacker in the head so that the right eye flew out, then killed him with a blow to the head. The fifth he hit between the shoulders so hard that his heart’s blood spewed out, and the sixth tried to escape but Havelok smote his foul neck in two. The seventh drew out his sword and aimed at Havelok’s eye, but Havelok let the bar fly and hit him in the breast so that he never was shriven by a priest, for he was dead in less time than it takes to run a mile!

The others conferred and decided to surround Havelok and injure him so that no salve or doctor could heal him. They drew their swords and rushed at him like dogs at a bear to tear it when men bear-bait. The lively lads surrounded him, some striking with clubs and some with stones; some stabbed Havelok’s back and sides with swords in more than twenty places, with wounds long and wide from head to toe. It was a wonder how he stood, for blood ran down his sides as water glides from the well. But Havelok was as a madman; he mowed them down with the door bar and showed them how he could deliver blows, for there was no one he could not overtake and crack his skull, so that in a little while he felled twenty to the ground.

Then a great din arose, as the murderous lads assailed him with great blows by throwing stones and spears from afar, for they would no more come near him than they would a boar or lion. Hugh Raven heard the noise and thought that men were making trouble with his lord over Goldeboru. He grabbed an oar and knife and ran like a deer; he was there in a moment and saw Havelok surrounded and being beaten as does a smith with hammer on anvil.

“Alas that I was ever born to see such sorrow! Robert! William! Where are you?” called Hugh. “Grab a good club and avenge our lord. Quick, follow me! Cursed be he who doesn’t deliver hard blows!” Robert grabbed a large, strong staff, William seized a beam greater than his thigh, and Bernard held his axe tightly. They rushed forth as though they were mad and gave the lads very great wounds: ribs, arms, knees, shins and thighs were broken to avenge Havelok. Blood ran down from head to feet; no one was spared. Backs and bellies were crushed and so tender that attackers roared like babes in cradles who have lost their mother. Curse anyone who cares, for they deserved it! Why were they there? They were beaten and mauled so long that of the sixty-one men, none left with their lives.

In the morning, mangled bodies lay on each other as though they were dogs that had been hanged, and some lay in ditches and others in trenches where they had been dragged by the hair and left. Ubbe soon heard that Havelok had slain sixty-one of his men-at-arms, the best there were.⁸

“By God,” said Ubbe, “what has happened? I had better go see for myself, for if I send someone else they might harm or shame Havelok, whom I love well. I would rather be lame than have Havelok taken, injured or insulted.” He

leapt lightly onto a steed and rode to town with many knights. He called Bernard Brun out of his house, who soon came, his body bruised and beaten and his clothes torn to shreds. Ubbe asked him how he got that way.

Bernard quickly said, "Mercy, lord, tonight as the moon rose more than sixty thieves came, with clasped cloaks and wide sleeves, to rob me and kill me and mine." Bernard gave Ubbe a detailed report of the action and praised Havelok's strength and bravery, who fought off and killed all the thieves despite his many injuries, which he described to Ubbe. "He is not to be blamed, for he either had to kill them or be slain or completely hewn and drawn. Lord, my only harm is having been mistreated tonight. The thieves would have robbed me but, thank God, they have paid for it. But it is a great pity about Havelok, whom I believe will die soon." When Ubbe asked Bernard whether he was telling the truth, he swore that he was: "If I am lying, hang me high tomorrow." The burgesses standing nearby confirmed with oaths that the thieves wanted to rob Bernard of any goods they could find:

"Lord, they would have taken all his things and left him mangled, but he was protected by God and lost no goods. There were sixty and ten strong lads and stalwart men, and their leader was named Griffin Galle. How could so many be withstood, unless this man from a distant land had slain them with a bar? Much joy to him! May God give him many goods to wield, both in town and field."

Ubbe said, "Bring him to me quickly so that I can see if his wounds can be healed. If he recovers, I shall dub him a knight for his bravery. And if any of the foul thieves live, who are kin of Cain and Eve, they should be hanged. Curse anyone who cares about their death, when they come at night to bind burgesses and knights! Nevermore do I care about such men." Havelok was brought before Ubbe, who had great concern and sorrow for Havelok's painful wounds. But when a physician said that he could be fully healed, Ubbe was relieved of his sadness and said:

"Come with me and bring Goldeboru and your three men-at-arms, for I will now be your warrant so that none of the friends of the men you slayed might lie in wait to kill you, and you will be free to come and go in safety while you are here. I shall lend you a chamber in the high tower until you are healed. There will be nothing between your room and mine but a firwood wall, so that you shall hear me speak, whether loud or low, and you will see me when you wish. One roof will cover us both at night, and your wife will be as safe as my own from being shamed by any of my men, clerk or knight."

Havelok happily brought his wife and three sergeants to the chamber. Around the middle of the first night, Ubbe awoke and saw a light as bright as day coming from Havelok's room.

"God, what's this?" wondered Ubbe. "I'd better go see myself whether he is up now and carousing or acting foolishly. This time of night men cast themselves into pools, ditches or the fen. No one is awake now except wicked men, gluttons, revelers and thieves." He peeked through a board and saw everyone fast asleep, lying as still as a stone, and that the bright light came out of Havelok's mouth. He called at least a hundred of his men of all kinds to come see the marvelous sight. They saw a light like a sunbeam come from Havelok's mouth, burning as brightly as a hundred candles or more. He lay on his left side with his arms around Goldeboru. They were naked to the breasts, and the knights enjoyed seeing two such beautiful people lying together. Since Havelok's back was towards them, they saw a cross on his right shoulder, bright as gold against the light, sparkling like a carbuncle, so everyone knew it was a king's-mark. They studied him and finally knew that he was the son of Birkabeyn, the king who had come to defend them against foreign invaders. Havelok's resemblance to Birkabeyn was so strong, they were convinced he was his heir.

They immediately fell at his feet, weeping with joy as if they had taken him from his grave. They kissed his feet, and he began to awaken and turned pale from fear of their killing, binding or harming him. Ubbe saw his dread and reassured him:

"Lord, don't be afraid. I am glad to see you! I pledge you my fealty; I ought to be your man since you are the son of Birkabeyn, who had many knights and swain, and so shall you. Although you are young, you will be king of Denmark, the most powerful ever. Tomorrow you will receive the fealty of everyone in this town, both earl and

baron, vassal and thane, knight and swain, and you will be made knight with joy, for you are so courageous.” Havelok thanked God many times. In the morning, Ubbe sent a message to earls, barons, vassals, thanes, clergy, knights, burgesses and swains to come to him quickly, as they loved their lives and those of their children and wives. No one dared ignore Ubbe’s call to see what the justiciar wanted. Ubbe stood and addressed the crowd:

“Listen to me all of you, bondman and free. You know well that all this land was in Birkabeyn’s hand when he died and how, at your advice, he gave his three children and all his property into Godard’s care. You all heard the earl swear on the book that he would protect them well, without fail. He broke his oath; may he have misfortune and woe forever, for he took the lives of the two daughters with a knife, which he held to Havelok’s heart and would have murdered him also. But, thanks to God, Godard felt pity for the boy and would not kill him with his own hand. But soon the fiend swore great oaths to a fisherman to have him drown the boy in the sea.

“When Grim the fisherman saw he was so fair and knew he was the rightful heir, he fled to England and fostered Havelok well. Look at him! He has no peer; there is no knight half as fair, large, strong or brave on earth. Come here quickly to pay homage. I will be the first, then all of you.” He knelt before Havelok and became his vassal, and before the day was over, every man from baron to swain had done the same. Then Havelok had them solemnly swear their loyalty to him against all who lived, and everyone quickly made that oath. He then had Ubbe send writs far and wide to kin and stranger calling them to come quickly to hear good news. Everyone hurried, on horse and on foot, so that within a fortnight there was not a knight, constable or sheriff who was not before Ubbe, whom they feared as a thief does a club. When they had all greeted the king and were seated, Ubbe said:

“Look here at our dear lord, who will be king of all the land and rule us all! He is Birkabeyn’s son, the king who formerly protected us with sharp sword and long spear. Look at Havelok, how handsome he is; surely he is Birkabeyn’s heir. Fall at his feet and become his vassals.” They were so afraid of Ubbe that they did as he commanded. Furthermore, they swore on the book that they would defend Havelok against anyone who would harm him. When the oaths had been made, Ubbe dubbed Havelok a knight with a bright sword and solemnly made him king of all the people and the land.

There was much gaiety and festivity, with tilting, fencing, wrestling, stone-casting and other games. Romances were read and tales were sung, with minstrels drumming, harping and piping. Men could watch bull-baiting, boars with lively hounds, and every kind of exciting entertainment. The giving of clothes was beyond belief, and the food was good and the wine was as plentiful as water in the sea. The feast lasted forty days, the most elaborate ever. The king made Robert, William and Hugh knights and barons, and gave them so much land and other property that each had twenty knights in their company, day and night.

When the feast was done, a thousand knights stayed with the king; each had a good steed, helm and shield, bright coats of mail, and all the weapons befitting a knight. Five thousand men-at-arms were with them, madly eager to fight. Not to prolong the story, when Havelok had placed constables in all the castles in the land, he swore he would not stop until he was avenged of Godard, of whom I have often spoken.⁹ He called fifty of his knights and all his five thousand sergeants and swore on the book and altar that he would never cease, for love or pity, until Godard had been found and brought bound before him.

After swearing this oath, he quickly went to the path where Godard was hunting with a large retinue. Robert, master of Havelok’s army, was armed with a sword and rode a highly spirited steed. He was the first to speak with Godard:

“Take heed, rogue! What are you doing on this path? Come quickly to the king, who sends you word and bids you to think about what you did when you took his sisters’ lives with a knife, and then tried to have him drowned in the sea, about which he heard. He is very furious with you; come now to him, the king of this country, you foul wicked traitor, and he will give you your reward, by Christ!”

When Godard heard that threat, he hit Robert with a strong blow to the teeth, and Robert pulled out a long knife and stabbed him through the right arm; there was little reason for pity! Godard’s men saw and heard how Robert had

fared with their lord and would have killed him had his two brothers and five others not slain ten of Godard's best men. The others fled when they saw that, and Godard shouted at them:

"My knights, what are you doing, running away from me? I have fed you and yet shall feed you; help me in this need and don't let them destroy my body or Havelok have his will with me. If you do, you shame and dishonor yourselves." When they heard that, the men returned and killed a knight and a swain of the king's men, and wounded about ten. Havelok's men set on Godard's and killed all but one: Godard, who was later flayed, as the thief is hanged or hounds are thrown in a ditch. They bound him tight and fast, and he roared like a bull trapped in a hole for dogs to bite and bait. They bound his hands and feet so painfully that he began to cry for God's mercy, but they beat him as a man does a bear and threw him onto a scabby mare, his nose facing its rear end.

They led Godard in this way to Havelok, to whom he had caused so much woe despite all his oaths, with hunger and cold before the boy was twelve years old, heavy toil, poor food and drink, and foul clothes. Now he must pay, for old sin makes new shame. The traitor was brought in this disgrace before the king, who had Ubbe summon all his men from earl and baron to burgess and knight. Havelok charged them with judging Godard according to his treachery, which was well known to them and had brought God's anger upon him. They sat down—rich and poor, noble and humble, old and young—and made their judgment. They told the king, who sat as still as a stone:

"We judge that Godard be flayed alive, then drawn by the foul mare to the gallows with a strong nail through his feet. There he shall be hanged with two fetters, with these words written there: 'This is the traitor who would have taken all the king's land and took his sisters' lives with a knife.' This writ shall hang by him there; this is our judgement, we say no more." When the judgment was given that Godard would lose his life no matter what, he was shriven by a priest. Then a lad came with a knife and began to cut and flay the skin like strips of cloth; Godard's screams could be heard for a mile, but the lad continued though Godard cried for mercy. They brought the bony, scabby, decrepit mare and tied him to its tail with the rope of an old sail and dragged him to the gallows, not through the gate but over the fields, and hanged him by the neck. Curse anyone who cares; he was false!

When that Satan was dead, Havelok seized all Godard's property and granted it to Ubbe. He then swore he would make a priory for Benedictine monks to serve Christ until doomsday, in honor of Grim, who cared for him when he was poor and in need. The priory was built in the town where Grim was buried, which still bears his name. When the foul traitor Godrich, Earl of Cornwall, heard that Havelok was king of Denmark and was coming to Grimsby with a strong army and Goldeboru, England's rightful heir, he was greatly upset and said:

"What shall I do? By God, I'll slay them both! I swear by my right eye that I'll hang them high unless they leave my land. Do they intend to dispossess me?" He quickly called an army of everyone who could ride a steed, wear a helm and coat of mail, bear shield and spear or any other weapon like a hand-axe, scythe, dagger, knife or spear. If they valued life and limb, they should come armed to Lincoln on the seventeenth of March, for which he would be grateful; he swore by Christ and St John that if any failed to come, they and their offspring would be made thralls. The Englishmen would not refuse Godrich's bidding, for they dreaded him more than a horse does the spur. They came to Lincoln on the appointed day on good steeds and well armed, so that the earl was ready to meet the Danes, and he told his army:

"Listen, all! I have gathered you here not for sport, but I will tell you why. An army of foreigners has come to Grimsby and taken the priory. Wherever they can, they burn churches, bind priests, and strangle monks and nuns. Friends, what do you advise? If they reign in this way they will overtake us and may hang us, or make us slaves and cause great evil, or take our lives and those of our children and wives. But do now as I instruct and you will be dear to me; go forth swiftly and help both me and yourselves by attacking those dogs! I will never be happy or receive the sacraments or be shriven until they are driven out of the land. Follow me, for I will be the first to slay with drawn sword, and cursed be whoever does not stand by me while his arms last!"

Earl Gunther and the Earl of Chester and all the men there cried "Yes, lord," and ran forth as if crazed. They threw on their bright coats of mail and helms and hastened to arms so that they were ready in as little time as it takes to

count out a pound. The large troop went quietly along the road until they approached Grimsby. Havelok knew of their actions and came against them with his full force. He greeted the first knight he met by cutting off his head without pity. Seeing that, Robert would never go from there until he had slain another with his outdrawn sword, and William struck a third with such a blow that the left arm flew onto the field, still holding the shield. Hugh Raven saw an earl nobly spurring his steed and smote him on the head which split in two, and the sword went through the shoulder blades and breast to the heart, and the earl fell down dead as a stone.

Ubbe felt he was waiting too long and attacked Godrich, who returned the blow. They fought so furiously that both fell off their horses head first and battled so that the sweat ran from their heads. They exchanged fierce blows from morning to night and would not cease until the sun set. Then Godrich gave Ubbe a wound in the side so serious that he would have fallen to the ground and lost his head had God and Hugh Raven not drawn him away and saved him.

But in the meantime a thousand knights and more were slain on both sides. There was such slaughter that the field was covered with pools of blood. Godrich began to slay the Danes as fast as a lion that spares no kind of beast and then is gone. The Danish men, knights and knaves, fell before him like grass before the sharp scythe. When Havelok saw his men so broken and his army diminished, he said to Godrich:

“What is the matter with you to deal with me in this way and kill my knights? Surely you do wrong. You know very well, if you will admit it, that you swore on holy objects that you would give all of England to Athelwold’s daughter when she was of age. Do it now without fighting, for that is right. I will forgive your enmity, all your misdeeds and all my wrath, for I see you are such a strong, good knight.”

“That I will never do!” said Godrich. “I will kill you and hang her. I will thrust out your eye that looks at me unless you flee from here.” He grabbed his sword and struck a blow so strong that it broke Havelok’s shield in two. When Havelok saw the shame done to him in front of his army, he drew out his sword and smote Godrich on the head, who fell down on the ground. But he didn’t lie there long; he jumped to his feet and smote Havelok on the shoulder, breaking the rings of his coat of mail and wounding his tender flesh so that the blood ran down to his toes. Havelok was so distressed that Godrich had given him such an injury and drawn his blood that he boldly went up to the earl and fully disgraced him. He lifted his sword high and cut off the hand with which Godrich had so painfully struck him. How might he have shamed him more?

After having disgraced and lamed Godrich, Havelok took him by the neck as a traitor—curse anyone who cares—and bound him in steel fetters. He sent him to the queen, who had good reason to be vengeful. He told her to have Godrich guarded until he had been properly judged, and that no one should injure or dishonor him since he was a knight. Then the Englishmen knew that Goldeboru was England’s rightful heir, and that she and the king had been wedded and bedded; they came to the king and cried for mercy, all in one voice. They offered him their fealty and oath that they would never go against him for any reason. The king would not forsake his duty to take their oaths of loyalty, but first he brought Goldeboru before the people for them to see. If they acknowledged her, he would know that she should be queen. Six earls went to bring Goldeboru, who had no peer on earth for courtesy. When she arrived, all of the Englishmen fell on their knees weeping and said:

“Lady, Christ’s mercy and yours! We have done much wrong and been fickle, for England ought to have been yours, and we your men. We all knew that Athelwold was ruler of this kingdom and you his heir, and that the traitor has held it wrongly; God let him soon be hung!”

Havelok told them, “Sit down and consider the actions by which Godrich has brought himself into such sorrow. Judge him appropriately, for justice spares neither clerk nor knight. Then I will receive homage and loyalty oaths according to the law of the land, if it is your wish and counsel.”

They soon sat down, for none dared delay the judgment. Godrich was sentenced to be bound tightly upon a wretched ass lengthwise, not across, with his nose upon its tail. He was to be led through Lincoln in shame, dressed in filthy

clothes, to a green (which I believe is still there) and tied to a stake and burned to dust. They also judged, as a warning to other traitors, that Godrich's children should lose their heritage forever.

When the sentence had been passed, Godrich was laid on the ass and led to the green and burned to ashes. Goldeboru was glad and thanked God many times that the foul traitor who would have disgraced her was burned. Now that she had been avenged of her foe, she said it was time to take homage. Havelok took fealty on the book from all the English, who swore great oaths to defend him against all who were alive and that should be born. When this was done Havelok called the Earl of Chester, who was a young, unmarried knight, and all his men, and said to him:

“If you take my counsel, I will do you much good, for I shall give you to wed the fairest thing alive: Gunnild of Grimsby. By St David, she is the daughter of Grim, who nurtured me and took me out of Denmark; surely because of him I am alive today. Blessed be his soul always! I advise you to marry her and make her a lady, for she is fair and generous and as gracious as can be. Furthermore, she has my favor, and I assure you before all the people here that as long as I live you will be dear to me for her sake.” The earl would not go against the king or refuse the marriage but was wedded that day. The marriage was well made, for never in any country did two live together as they did all their lives. They had five sons, who were the best men at need who might ride on any steed.

Havelok did not forget Bertram, who had been Godrich's cook, and called him: “Friend, now you will have rich reward for your guidance and the good deeds you did when I was in need. When I came in my cloak and had no bread, food or possessions you fed and dressed me well, for which I give you the earldom of Cornwall and all the land Godrich held in town and in field. And it is my will that you marry Grim's daughter Leive and bring her into courtly life as befits a fine lady, for she is as fair as a flower. Her complexion is like a rose bloom when it is newly opened into the bright, warm sun.” Havelok soon girded Bertram with the sword of his earldom before his company, and made him knight and gave him arms, as is right. And soon the earl wed her, who was sweet in bed. He did not stay, but left to take possession of his land. He and his wife lived a hundred winters of good life in bliss, and had many children.

As soon as the two maidens had been married, Havelok began to endow his Danish men with rich lands and property, for he was very generous. Soon thereafter he went to London with his army to be crowned, so that English and Danish of all degrees saw him bear it with great pride before his many nobles. The joyful coronation feast lasted more than forty days. Then the Danes began to ask leave, and he would not refuse since he saw they wanted to return to Denmark. He gave them permission and commended them to St John, and told Ubbe, his justiciar, to go as well to guard Denmark so that he received no complaints.

When everyone had departed, Havelok remained happily in England and was king for sixty years, and Goldeboru queen. There was so much love between them that the world spoke of them. They were only happy when they were together and never angry with each other, for their love was always new. They had fifteen children, all of whom were kings and queens, as God would have it.

Now you have heard the whole story of Havelok and Goldeboru: how they were born and fed, how they were wronged in their youth with treachery, treason and felony, how the traitors tried to take from them their right, and how they were well avenged. I have told you all, and therefore I ask each of you who have heard the new rhyme to say with good will a paternoster for him who stayed awake many nights to make it, so that Christ will bring his soul before His Father at his end. Amen.

Translation: Medieval Forum, ed. George W. Tuma, Professor Emeritus of English, and Dinah Hazell, Independent Scholar; hosted by the English Department, San Francisco State University <http://www.sfsu.edu/~medieval/>