

BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Table of Contents

<u>BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH</u>	1
<u>ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON</u>	1

BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

This page copyright © 2001 Blackmask Online.

<http://www.blackmask.com>

Constantinus, King of the Scots, after having sworn allegiance to Athelstan, allied himself with the Danes of Ireland under Anlaf, and invading England, was defeated by Athelstan and his brother Edmund with great slaughter at Brunanburh in the year 937.

Athelstan King,
Lord among Earls,
Bracelet–bestower and
Baron of Barons,
He with his brother,
Edmund Atheling,
Gaining a lifelong
Glory in battle,
Slew with the sword–edge
There by Brunanburh,
Brake the shield–wall,
Hew'd the lindenwood,
Hack'd the battleshield,

Sons of Edward with hammer'd brands.

Theirs was a greatness
Got from their Grandsires
Theirs that so often in
Strife with their enemies
Struck for their hoards and their hearths and their homes.

Bow'd the spoiler,
Bent the Scotsman,
Fell the shipcrews
Doom'd to the death.
All the field with blood of the fighters
Flow'd, from when first the great
Sun–star of morningtide,
Lamp of the Lord God
Lord everlasting,
Glode over earth till the glorious creature
Sank to his setting.
There lay many a man
Marr'd by the javelin,
Men of the Northland
Shot over shield.
There was the Scotsman

BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

Weary of war.

We the West-Saxons,
Long as the daylight
Lasted, in companies
Troubled the track of the host that we hated;
Grimly with swords that were sharp from the grindstone
Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before us.

Mighty the Mercian,
Hard was his hand-play,
Sparing not any of
Those that with Anlaf,
Warriors over the
Weltering waters
Borne in the bark's-bosom,
Drew to this island:
Doom'd to the death.

Five young kings put asleep by the sword-stroke,
Seven strong earls of the army of Anlaf
Fell on the war-field, numberless numbers,
Shipmen and Scotsmen.

Then the Norse leader,
Dire was his need of it,
Few were his following,
Fled to his warship;
Fleeted his vessel to sea with the king in it,
Saving his life on the fallow flood.

Also the crafty one,
Constantinus,
Crept to his north again,
Hoar-headed hero!

Slender warrant had
He to be proud of
The welcome of war-knives
He that was reft of his
Folk and his friends that had
Fallen in conflict,
Leaving his son too
Lost in the carnage,
Mangled to morsels,
A youngster in war!

Slender reason had
He to be glad of
The clash of the war-glaive
Traitor and trickster

BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

And spurner of treaties
He nor had Anlaf
With armies so broken
A reason for bragging
That they had the better
In perils of battle
On places of slaughter
The struggle of standards,
The rush of the javelins,
The crash of the charges,
The wielding of weapons
The play that they play'd with
The children of Edward.

Then with their nail'd prows
Parted the Norsemen, a
Blood–redde'n'd relic of
Javelins over
The jarring breaker, the deep–sea billow,
Shaping their way toward Dyflen again,
Shamed in their souls.

Also the brethren,
King and Atheling,
Each in his glory,
Went to his own in his own West–Saxonland,
Glad of the war.

Many a carcase they left to be carrion,
Many a livid one, many a sallow–skin
Left for the white–tail'd eagle to tear it, and
Left for the horny–nibb'd raven to rend it, and
Gave to the garbaging war–hawk to gorge it, and
That gray beast, the wolf of the weald.

Never had huger
Slaughter of heroes
Slain by the sword–edge
Such as old writers
Have writ of in histories
Hapt in this isle, since
Up from the East hither
Saxon and Angle from
Over the broad billow
Broke into Britain with
Haughty war–workers who
Harried the Welshman, when
Earls that were lured by the
Hunger of glory gat
Hold of the land.