

THE DEATH OF HACO.

THE summer is gone, Haco, Haco ;
The yellow year is fled ;
And the winter is come, Haco,
That numbers thee with the dead !

When the year was young, Haco, Haco,
And the skies were blue and bright,
Thou didst sweep the seas, Haco,
Like a bird with wings of might.

With thine oaken galley, proudly,
And thy gilded dragon-prow,
O'er the bounding billows, Haco,
Like a sea-god thou didst go.

With thy barons gaily, gaily,
All in proof of burnished mail,
In the voes of Orkney, Haco,
Thou didst spread thy prideful sail ;

And the sturdy men of Caithness,
And the land of the Mackay,
And the men of Stony Parf, Haco,
Knew that Norway's king was nigh.

And the men of utmost Lewis, Haco,
And Skye, with winding kyles,
And Macdougall's country, Haco,
Knew the monarch of the isles.

And the granite peaks of Arran,
And the rocks that fence the Clyde,
Saw thy daring Norsemen, Haco,
Ramping o'er the Scottish tide.

But scaith befell thee, Haco, Haco !
 Thou wert faithful, thou wert brave ;
 But not truth might shield thee, Haco,
 From a false and shuffling knave.

The crafty King of Scots, Haco,
 Who might not bar thy way,
 Beguiled thee, honest Haco,
 With lies that bred delay.

And hasty winter, Haco, Haco,
 Came and tripped the summer's heels,
 And rent the sails of Haco
 And swamped his conquering keels.

Woe is me for Haco, Haco !
 On Lorn and Mull and Skye
 The hundred ships of Haco
 In a thousand fragments lie !

And thine oaken galley, Haco,
 That sailed with kingly pride,
 Came shorn and shattered, Haco,
 Through the foaming Pentland tide.

And thy heart sunk, Haco, Haco,
 And thou felt that thou must die,
 When the bay of Kirkwall, Haco,
 Thou beheld with drooping eye.

And they led thee, Haco, Haco,
 To the bishop's lordly hall,
 Where thy woe-struck barons, Haco,
 Stood to see the mighty fall.

And the purple churchmen, Haco,
 Stood to hold thy royal head,

The Death of Haco.

And good words of hope to Haco
From the Holy Book they read.

Then out spake the dying Haco,
"Dear are God's dear words to me,
But read the book to Haco
Of the kings that ruled the sea."

Then they read to dying Haco
From the ancient saga hoar,
Of Holden and of Harold,
When his fathers worshipped Thor

And they shrove the dying Haco,
And they prayed his bed beside;
And with holy unction Haco
Drooped his kingly head and died.

And in parade of death, Haco,
They stretched thee on thy bed,
With a purple vest for Haco,
And a garland on his head.

And around thee, Haco, Haco,
Were tapers burning bright,
And masses were sung for Haco
By day and eke by night.

And they bore thee, Haco, Haco,
To holy Magnus' shrine,
And beside his sainted bones, Haco,
They chastely confined thine.

And above thee, Haco, Haco,
To deck thy dreamless bed,
All crisp with gold for Haco,
A purple pall they spread.

And around thee, Haco, Haco,
Where the iron sleep thou slept,
Through the long, dark winter, Haco,
A solemn watch they kept.

And at early burst of springtime,
When the birds sang out with glee,
They took the body of Haco
In a ship across the sea—

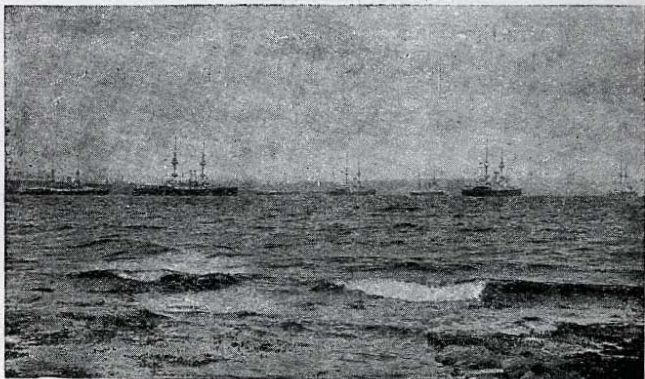
Across the sea to Norway,
Where thy sires make moan for thee,
That the last of his race was Haco,
Who ruled the Western Sea.

And they laid thee, Haco, Haco,
With thy sires on the Norway shore,
And far from the isles of the sea, Haco,
That know thy name no more.

JOHN STUART BLACKIE.

(From "*Lays of the Highlands and Islands.*")

(By permission of the Walter Scott Publishing Company.)



A modern war-fleet in Kirkwall Bay.