

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW ARGON GOT THE SOVEREIGNTY AT LAST.

WHEN Argon heard the words of Boga he took them in truth for an untimely jest, and replied with much bitterness of soul: "Good my Lord," quoth he, "you do ill to mock me thus! Surely it suffices that you have done me so great wrong already, and that you hold me, your lawful Lord, here a prisoner and in chains! Ye know well, as I cannot doubt, that you are doing an evil and a wicked thing, so I pray you go your way, and cease to flout me." "Good my Lord Argon," said Boga, "be assured we are not mocking you, but are speaking in sober earnest, and we will swear it on our Law." Then all the Barons swore fealty to him as their Lord, and Argon too swore that he would never reckon it against them that they had taken him prisoner, but would hold them as dear as his father before him had done.

And when these oaths had passed they struck off Argon's fetters, and hailed him as their lord. Argon then desired them to shoot a volley of arrows into the tent of the Melic who had held them prisoners, and who was in command of the army, that he might be slain. At his word they tarried not, but straightway shot a great number of arrows at the tent, and so slew the Melic. When that was done Argon took the supreme command and gave his orders as sovereign, and was obeyed by all. And you must know that the name of him who was slain, whom we have called the Melic, was SOLDAN; and he was the greatest Lord after Acomat himself. In this way that you have heard, Argon recovered his authority.