

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

It chanced that I, the Editor of these pages--for, in truth, that is my humble function--have recovered a considerable knowledge of a bygone life of mine. This life ended in times that are comparatively recent, namely, early in the ninth century, as is fixed by the fact that the Byzantine Empress, Irene, plays a part in the story.

The narrative, it will be observed, is not absolutely consecutive; that is to say, all the details are not filled in. Indeed, it has returned to me in a series of scenes or pictures, and although each scene or picture has to do with every other, there are sometimes gaps between them. To take one example among several--the journey of Olaf (in those days my name was Olaf, or Michael after I was baptised) from the North to Constantinople is not recorded. The curtain drops at Aar in Jutland and rises again in Byzantium. Only those events which were of the most importance seem to have burned themselves into my subconscious memory; many minor details have vanished, or, at least, I cannot find them. This, however, does not appear to me to be a matter for regret. If every episode of a full and eventful life were painted in, the canvas would be overloaded and the eye that studied it bewildered.

I do not think that I have anything more to say. My tale must speak for itself. So I will but add that I hold it unnecessary to set out the exact method by which I have been able to dig it and others from the quarry of my past. It is a gift which, although small at first, I have

been able gradually to develop. Therefore, as I wish to hide my present identity, I will only sign myself

The Editor.