SAFRANINE, in chemistry, the azonium compounds of symmetrical diamino-phenazine and containing the ring system annexed:—

They are obtained by the joint oxidation of one molecule of a paradiamine with two molecules of a primary amine; by the condensation of para-aminoazo compounds with primary amines (O. Witt, *Ber.,* 1877, 10, p. 874), and by the action of para-nitrosodialkylanilines with secondary bases such as diphenylmetaphenylenediamine. They are crystalline solids showing a characteristic green metallic lustre; they are readily soluble in water and dye red or violet. They are strong bases and form stable monacid salts. Their alcoholic solution shows a yellow-red fluorescence.

Phenosafranine is not very stable in the free state; its chloride forms green plates. It can be readily diazotized, and the diazonium salt when boiled with alcohol yields aposafranine or benzene induline, C18H12N2 F. Kehrmann showed that aposafranine could be dia- zotized in the presence of cold concentrated sulphuric acid, and the diazonium salt on boiling with alcohol yielded phenylphenazonium salts. Aposafranone, C18H12N2O, is formed by heating aposafranine with concentrated hydrochloric acid. These three compounds are perhaps to be represented as ortho- or as paraquinones (see papers by F. Kehrmann, O. Fischer and E. Hepp; R. Nietzki and others, *Βer.,* 1895 et seq.). The “ safranine ” of commerce is a tolusafranine. The first aniline dye-stuff to be prepared on a manufacturing scale was *mauυeine,* C27H25N4Cl which was obtained by Sir W. H. Perkin by heating crude aniline with potassium bichromate and sulphuric acid. It is a N-phenylsafranine (see Indulines).

SAGA (literally a story committed to writing), a word derived from Icel. *segja,* to say. The term is common to most of the Teutonic languages, where we find Eng. *say,* Ger. *sagen,* the O. Eng. *secgan,* Dan. *sige* and Swed. *segja,* all identical in meaning. A saga, therefore, was originally something reported, *segin saga,* a tale told, in English a *saw.* But the earliest literature of Scandinavia goes back to an age before writing was invented, and when the legends were first put down they were called sagas because they were things which had been told or repeated from mouth to mouth. The early books speak of sagas which, apparently, had never been written down and were in conse- quence lost; but, as soon as the art of writing was understood, the word *saga* began for the future to be used exclusively for written historical books. A volume made up of such histories was known as a *sogubòk* or book of sagas. They were not rigidly historical; any story which was written down, and repeated according to the literary formula, was called a saga. The telling of tales was a recognized form of entertainment at Icelandic banquets, and in *Haraldssaga Harðráða* there are very interesting details regarding these public saga-tellings; the person who repeated or read the tale being known as the *sögumaðrrna%r* or saga- man, and being held in high honour at the feast.

The saga was properly a creation of the peculiar conditions under which Icelandic society was constituted in the earliest medieval times. The aristocratic Icelander had no diversions, except games of strength and skill out of doors and the listening to professional story-tellers indoors. As has been often pointed out, the saga is a prose epic, and in its various kinds it follows strict laws of composition. The lesser epic, in its original form, was the biography of some heroic Icelander who had lived in the 10th or 11th century. It was composed with great regularity, so as to proceed uniformly from the birth of the hero to his death, and indeed from before the one date until after the other. The style is brief, clear and conversational; the hero was often a distinguished poet, and in that case some of the best of his verses are interwoven into the narrative, being put in his mouth on striking occasions. Alliteration takes a great part in the ornament of the style. The skill with which the story is told, the high romantic sense of honour and courage which is displayed, the quick turns of the dialogue, the brilliant evolution of the plot, all these give enduring charm to the more successful and ample of the sagas, and in the earlier examples

these qualities are very rarely missing. It is to be remembered, however, that the saga was intended to be listened to, not read, by an audience which was mainly interested in three subjects, namely fighting, litigation and pedigree. It was illegitimate for the saga-man, in the preparation of his epic, to allow himself to stray for any length of time from one of those three themes; since even love must be considered in the light of an episode.

The period of the saga-age, as it was called, the *sögu-old* or epoch celebrated in the sagas, is now confined between the years 890 and 1030, and opens with the original colonization of Iceland. The deaths in 1030 of two great statesmen, Snorri and Skapti the Lawman, mark its close; almost immediately afterwards, before the end of the 11th century, the actual age of saga- composition is in full action; and lastly comes the *rit-öld,* or age of writing when the sagas were preserved in their present literary form, the blossoming time of which was the 13th century. According to the definite statement of the great historian, Sturla, the first man who wrote down in the Norse tongue, in Iceland, “ histories relating to times ancient and modern,” was Ari Frόði (1067-1148), who was therefore the earliest of the saga-writers. He, as we know, was the author of three works of vast importance in the history of Icelandic literature. These were *Konunga-bόk* or the Book of King, *Landnama-bόk* or the Book of Settlements and *Islendinga-bόk* or the Book of Icelanders. The second of these, in which Ari was assisted by Kolsegg Asbjomsson, survives and is of priceless value. Of the first and third, we possess abbreviations and summaries. It is believed that the admirable style in which the sagas are composed was the invention of Ari, to whose individual genius the form of classic prose tradition is attributed. He has no rival in this respect, and is the true father of the Icelandic saga. The works of Saemund Vigfusson (1056-1133), who succeeded Ari as a writer of the lives of kings, are unfortunately lost.

We now pass to what are called the Greater or Islendinga sagas, which are of a more intense and romantic character than the historical biographies. Among these the greatest is *Njalssaga* (or *Njala),* which few critics will question to be the most eminent masterpiece of Icelandic literature. There is no clue to the name of the author, who was evidently a lawyer; extensive as is the work, it is evidently written by one hand, for peculiarities and felicitous originalities of style recur through- out the whole saga. It must have been composed between 1230 and 1280. Vigfusson has described *Njala* as being, *par excellence,* the saga of law, and adds, “ the very spirit indeed of Early Law seems to breathe through its pages.” The scene in which Njal, the Lawman of judgment and peace, is burned in his homestead by his enemies is perhaps the most magnificent passage which has been preserved in the whole ancient literature of the North. The story of *Njala* is placed at the close of the 10th and the first years of the 11th century. *Eyrbyggiasaga* deals with politics as *Njalssaga* deals with law; it is a precious compendium of history and tradition handed down from heathen times. It has been suggested that it may be, at all events in part, the work of Sturla the Lawman, who died in 1284. Extremely beautiful in its relation to external nature, a matter often ignored in the sagas, is *Laxdaelasaga,* which is also the most romantic in sentiment. It was probably written about 1235, but by whom is unknown. The aristocratic spirit of the great Icelandic families finds its most characteristic exposition in *Egilssaga,* a very vigorous tale of adventure, the central figure of which, Egil, is depicted with more psychological subtlety than is usual in the sagas; it probably belongs to about 1230. Into *Grettissaga* there enter biographical and mythical elements, curiously mingled; it is also confused in form, and is probably a recension, made about 1310, of two or more earlier sagas now lost, the finest parts of which it is thought that Sturla may have written. These are the five famous groups of anonymous narrative which are known as the Greater Sagas.

The Minor Sagas must be treated more briefly. *Hensa- Þorissaga,* belonging to the south-west of Iceland, deserves attention because of its extreme antiquity; it has been dated 993. *Gunnlaugssaga Ormstungu* (The story of Gunnlaug Worm-