

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Anonymous

Table of Contents

<u>Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")</u>	1
<u>Anonymous</u>	1
<u>Preface</u>	2
<u>Chapter 1. Herein Is Told How Ketil Flatneb Fares To West-Over-Sea</u>	11
<u>Chapter 2. Of Biorn Ketilson and Thorolf Most-Beard</u>	12
<u>Chapter 3. Thorolf Most-Beard Outlawed By King Harald Hairfair</u>	12
<u>Chapter 4. Thorolf Most-Beard Comes Out To Iceland, And Sets Up House There</u>	13
<u>Chapter 5. Biorn Ketilson Comes West-Over-The-Sea, But Will Not Abide There</u>	14
<u>Chapter 6. Biorn Comes Out To Iceland</u>	18
<u>Chapter 7. Of The Kin Of Kiallak</u>	18
<u>Chapter 8. Of Thorolf Halt-Foot</u>	19
<u>Chapter 9. Of Thorstein Codbiter, Battle At Thorsness Thing</u>	19
<u>Chapter 10. Peace Made</u>	20
<u>Chapter 11. Of Thorgrim The Priest, The Death Of Thorstein Codbiter</u>	22
<u>Chapter 12. Of Arnkel The Priest And Others</u>	22
<u>Chapter 13. Of Snorri Thorgrimson</u>	23
<u>Chapter 14. Snorri Gets Holyfell</u>	24
<u>Chapter 15. Of Snorri The Priest, Of The Mewlithe-Folk</u>	25
<u>Chapter 16. Gunnlaug Is Witch-Ridden, Geirrid Summoned, Of Thorarin</u>	27
<u>Chapter 17. Strife At The Thorsness Thing; Snorri Goes Between</u>	27
<u>Chapter 18. Men Will Ransack At Mewlithe: Thorarin Falls To Fight</u>	28
<u>Chapter 19. The Lay Of The Mewlithers</u>	31
<u>Chapter 20. The End Of Katla And Odd</u>	35
<u>Chapter 21. They Take Rede About The Blood-Feud</u>	38
<u>Chapter 22. Snorri Summons Thorarin</u>	38
<u>Chapter 23. Of Vigfus And Biorn And Mar</u>	39
<u>Chapter 24. Of Eric the Red</u>	40
<u>Chapter 25. Of Vermund And Thorarin In Norway; Of Those Bareserks</u>	40
<u>Chapter 26. Of Vigfus And Swart The Strong, The Slaying Of Vigfus</u>	42
<u>Chapter 27. Arnkel Takes Up The Blood-Feud For Vigfus</u>	43
<u>Chapter 28. The Wooing of Asdis, Stir's Daughter</u>	45
<u>Chapter 29. Of The Evil Dealings Of Thorolf Halt-Foot</u>	47
<u>Chapter 30. Of Thorod Scat-Catcher And Of Biorn Asbrandson, And Of The Slaying Of The Sons Of Thorir Wooden-Leg</u>	49
<u>Chapter 31. Of Thorolf Halt-Foot And Snorri The Priest</u>	52
<u>Chapter 32. The Slaying Of Ulfar: Thorbrand's Sons Claim The Heritage</u>	53
<u>Chapter 33. Of The Death Of Thorolf Halt-Foot</u>	55
<u>Chapter 34. Thorolf Halt-Foot Walks; The Second Burial Of Him</u>	56
<u>Chapter 35. Arnkel Slays Hawk</u>	57
<u>Chapter 36. Thorleif Would Slay Arnkel, And Is Slain</u>	59
<u>Chapter 37. The Slaying Of Arnkel</u>	60
<u>Chapter 38. The Blood-Suit For Arnkel</u>	62
<u>Chapter 39. Of Thorleif Kimbi And His Dealings With Arnbiorn</u>	62
<u>Chapter 40. Of Biorn, The Champion Of The Broadwickers, And His Dealings With Thurid Of Frodis-Water</u>	63
<u>Chapter 41. Of Thorleif Kimbi And Thord Wall-Eye</u>	66
<u>Chapter 42. Thorbrand's Sons Make An Onslaught On Arnbiorn</u>	67
<u>Chapter 43. Of Egil The Strong</u>	67

Table of Contents

Chapter 44. The Battle In Swanfirth.....	70
Chapter 45. The Battle In Swordfirth.....	72
Chapter 46. The Peace-Making After These Battles.....	76
Chapter 47. Of Thorod Scat-Catcher And Snorri And Biorn The Champion Of The Broad-Wickers.....	77
Chapter 48. Of Thorbrand's Sons In Greenland.....	78
Chapter 49. Of The Coming Of Christ's Faith To Iceland.....	79
Chapter 50. Of Thorgunna. And How She Came To Frodis-Water.....	79
Chapter 51. It Rains Blood At Frodis-Water. Of Thorgunna. And How She Died And Was Buried At Skalaholt.....	80
Chapter 52. The Beginning Of Wonders At Frodis-Water.....	83
Chapter 53. Now Men Die At Frodis-Water. More Wonders.....	83
Chapter 54. The Death Of Thorod Scat-Catcher; The Dead Walk At Frodis-Water.....	84
Chapter 55. A Door-Doom At Frodis-Water.....	85
Chapter 56. Of Snorri The Priest And The Blood-Suit After Stir.....	86
Chapter 57. Of Uspak Of Ere In Bitter. And Of His Injustice.....	88
Chapter 58. Uspak Robs Alf The Little. Thorir Chases Uspak.....	90
Chapter 59. Uspak And His Men At The Strands. They Give Up Their Work.....	91
Chapter 60. Uspak Goes Back To Ere In Bitter: He Robs And Slays.....	91
Chapter 61. Snorri Sends For Thrand The Strider.....	93
Chapter 62. Snorri And Sturla Win The Work At Ere In Bitter.....	94
Chapter 63. Of The Walking Of Thorolf Halt-Foot. He Is Dug Up And Burned. Of The Bull Glossy.....	95
Chapter 64. The Last Tidings Of Biorn The Champion Of The Broadwickers.....	98
Chapter 65. The Kindred Of Snorri The Priest; The Death Of Him.....	100
Appendix A. The Children Of Snorri The Priest.....	103

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Anonymous

translated by William Morris Eirikr Magnusson

- [PREFACE](#)
- [CHAPTER I: Herein Is Told How Ketil Flatneb Fares To West-Over-Sea.](#)
- [CHAPTER II: Of Biorn Ketilson and Thorolf Most-Beard.](#)
- [CHAPTER III: Thorolf Most-Beard Outlawed By King Harald Hairfair.](#)
- [CHAPTER IV: Thorolf Most-Beard Comes Out To Iceland, And Sets Up House There.](#)
- [CHAPTER V: Biorn Ketilson Comes West-Over-The-Sea, But Will Not Abide There.](#)
- [CHAPTER VI: Biorn Comes Out To Iceland.](#)
- [CHAPTER VII: Of The Kin Of Kiallak.](#)
- [CHAPTER VIII: Of Thorolf Halt-Foot.](#)
- [CHAPTER IX: Of Thorstein Codbiter. Battle At Thorsness Thing.](#)
- [CHAPTER X: Peace Made.](#)
- [CHAPTER XI: Of Thorgrim The Priest, The Death Of Thorstein Codbiter.](#)
- [CHAPTER XII: Of Arnkel The Priest And Others.](#)
- [CHAPTER XIII: Of Snorri Thorgrimson.](#)
- [CHAPTER XIV: Snorri Gets Holyfell.](#)
- [CHAPTER XV: Of Snorri The Priest, Of The Mewlithe-Folk.](#)
- [CHAPTER XVI: Gunnlaug Is Witch-Ridden, Geirrid Summoned, Of Thorarin.](#)
- [CHAPTER XVII: Strife At The Thorsness Thing; Snorri Goes Between.](#)
- [CHAPTER XVIII: Men Will Ransack At Mewlithe: Thorarin Falls To Fight.](#)
- [CHAPTER XIX: The Lay Of The Mewlithers.](#)
- [CHAPTER XX: The End Of Katla And Odd.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXI: They Take Rede About The Blood-Feud.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXII: Snorri Summons Thorarin.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXIII: Of Vigfus And Biorn And Mar.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXIV: Of Eric the Red.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXV: Of Vermund And Thorarin In Norway; Of Those Bareserks.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXVI: Of Vigfus And Swart The Strong. The Slaying Of Vigfus.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXVII: Arnkel Takes Up The Blood-Feud For Vigfus.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXVIII: Of The Bareserks And The Wooing of Asdis, Stir's Daughter.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXIX: Of Thorod Scat-Catcher And Of Biorn Asbrandson, And Of The Slaying Of The Sons Of Thorir Wooden-Leg.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXX: Of The Evil Dealings Of Thorolf Halt-Foot.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXXI: Of Thorolf Halt-Foot And Snorri The Priest.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXXII: The Slaying Of Ulfar: Thorbrand's Sons Claim The Heritage.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXXIII: Of The Death Of Thorolf Halt-Foot.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXXIV: Thorolf Halt-Foot Walks; The Second Burial Of Him.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXXV: Arnkel Slays Hawk.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXXVI: Thorleif Would Slay Arnkel, And Is Slain.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXXVII: The Slaying Of Arnkel.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXXVIII: The Blood-Suit For Arnkel.](#)
- [CHAPTER XXXIX: Of Thorleif Kimbi And His Dealings With Arnbiorn.](#)
- [CHAPTER XL: Of Biorn, The Champion Of The Broadwickers, And His Dealings With Thurid Of Frodis-Water.](#)
- [CHAPTER XLI: Of Thorleif Kimbi And Thord Wall-Eye.](#)

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

- [CHAPTER XLII: Thorbrand's Sons Make An Onslaught On Armbiorn.](#)
- [CHAPTER XLIII: Of Egil The Strong.](#)
- [CHAPTER XLIV: The Battle In Swanfirth.](#)
- [CHAPTER XLV: The Battle In Swordfirth.](#)
- [CHAPTER XLVI: The Peace-Making After These Battles.](#)
- [CHAPTER XLVII: Of Thorod Scat-Catcher And Snorri And Biorn The Champion Of The Broad-Wickers.](#)
- [CHAPTER XLVIII: Of Thorbrand's Sons In Greenland.](#)
- [CHAPTER XLIX: Of The Coming Of Christ's Faith To Iceland.](#)
- [CHAPTER L: Of Thorgunna. And How She Came To Frodis-Water.](#)
- [CHAPTER LI: It Rains Blood At Frodis-Water. Of Thorgunna. And How She Died And Was Buried At Skalaholt.](#)
- [CHAPTER LII: The Beginning Of Wonders At Frodis-Water.](#)
- [CHAPTER LIII: Now Men Die At Frodis-Water. More Wonders.](#)
- [CHAPTER LIV: The Death Of Thorod Scat-Catcher: The Dead Walk At Frodis-Water.](#)
- [CHAPTER LV: A Door-Doom At Frodis-Water.](#)
- [CHAPTER LVI: Of Snorri The Priest And The Blood-Suit After Stir.](#)
- [CHAPTER LVII: Of Uspak Of Ere In Bitter. And Of His Injustice.](#)
- [CHAPTER LVIII: Uspak Robs Alf The Little. Thorir Chases Uspak.](#)
- [CHAPTER LIX: Uspak And His Men At The Strands. They Give Up Their Work.](#)
- [CHAPTER LX: Uspak Goes Back To Ere In Bitter: He Robs And Slays.](#)
- [CHAPTER LXI: Snorri Sends For Thrand The Strider.](#)
- [CHAPTER LXII: Snorri And Sturla Win The Work At Ere In Bitter.](#)
- [CHAPTER LXIII: Of The Walking Of Thorolf Halt-Foot. He Is Dug Up And Burned. Of The Bull Glossy.](#)
- [CHAPTER LXIV: The Last Tidings Of Biorn The Champion Of The Broadwickers.](#)
- [CHAPTER LXV: The Kindred Of Snorri The Priest: The Death Of Him.](#)
- [APPENDIX A: The Children Of Snorri The Priest.](#)

This page copyright © 2000 Blackmask Online.

Preface

Originally written in Icelandic (Old Norse) sometime around the middle of the 13th century. Author unknown, although some scholars have suggested a connection with the author of the "Laxdaela Saga".

The text of this edition is based on that published as "THE SAGA LIBRARY, VOL. II: THE STORY OF THE ERE-DWELLERS, translated by William Morris Eirikr Magnusson (Bernard Quaritch, London, 1892). This edition is in the PUBLIC DOMAIN in the United States.

THE ERE-DWELLERS' STORY is in character a mixture of a saga, or dramatically told tale, and a chronicle record of events outside its aim and purpose. It differs from all other Icelandic sagas in having for a central hero a man of peace, yet at the same time revengeful and ruthless when he sees his opportunity, always cool and collected, dissimulating, astute, scheming, and unmistakably hinted at as one devoid of courage. Snorri the Priest figures throughout the story up to the death of the nobly chivalrous Arnkel, when we except his clever outwitting of his cowardly uncle and stepfather, Bork the Thick, as distinctly a second-rate chief, above whom Arnkel towers to such an extent that all the interest of the narrative centres in him. Even when Arnkel is removed in a most ungallant fashion, Steinthor of Ere bids fair to eclipse Snorri altogether; and it is first when peace is made after the fights in Swanfirth and Swordfirth, a peace to which Steinthor held loyally ever afterwards, being a man of wisdom and moderation, that Snorri becomes the real central figure of the saga, and remains so to the end. Yet this prestige he owed entirely to the alliance of his turbulent and, at times, highly disrespectful foster-brothers, the sons of Thorbrand of Swanfirth, who, on the

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

ground of his want of courage and directness, goaded him first unto the slaying of Arnkel, and again into the second brunt of the battle of Swanfirth.

The interest of the narrative centering thus rather in groups of actors than in single persons, when we except Arnkel and Biorn the Broadwickers' Champion, who both drop out of the story long before it comes to an end, the author himself has looked upon it as a "historia tripartita", in calling it at the end, the Story of the Thorsnessings, the Ere-dwellers, and the Swanfirthers, under which names we find it variously referred to in Icelandic writings of olden times. Curiously enough, the popular mind has preferred to connect it exclusively with the family which takes the least prominent part in it; hence "Eyrbyggja saga", or Ere-dwellers' story, is the title given to it in all the MSS. which contain it.

Between our saga and the "Landnamabok" there is a close connection. The genealogies agree absolutely in both records, so far as they go in our saga; and in this respect the "Landnama" is unquestionably the source. The author of our story himself even hints as much. In chap. VII, mentioning that Thorolf Mostbeard married in old age a woman called Unn, he goes out of his way to state that Ari the Learned does not, as others do, mention her among the children of Thorstein the Red; and this is just what the "Landnama" does not do.

In the biographical notices which in both works are attached to the names of the first settlers and their immediate descendants, a distinct unity of tradition is clearly traceable, yet the discrepancies are such as scarcely to warrant the supposition that our saga drew, except to a slight amount, its information from "Landnama", while, on the other hand, the "Landnama" has, at least in one instance, drawn for information on the Ere-dwellers' story.

It should be borne in mind that the "Landnama", as we now have it, is the work of no less than five authors. Originally it was written by two contemporaries, Ari and Kolskegg, each popularly named "hinn frothi", the learned, the latter writing the history of the land-takes for the quarter of the Eastfirths, the former doing all the rest. This joint work was again edited, with some additions no doubt, by Styrmir hinn frothi, prior of Vithey, ob. 1245, and later by Sturla Thordson, ob. 1284, the author of "Islendingasaga", the great history of the Sturlung period, and other works. These two editions of the original work, independent of each other, Hawk "the justiciary", son of Erlend, ob. 1334, amalgamated into one book in such manner that whatever was stated more fully in either copy he embodied in his own, adding apparently nothing beyond bringing his own genealogy down to date. How far the two thirteenth century editors respectively added to and interpolated the original work, beyond augmenting it with their own genealogies down to their lifetime, is now difficult to decide in many cases; in some the interpolations are easily traced.

Naturally it is mostly in the first twelve chapters of our saga that the affinity with "Landnama" shows itself, they being concerned with the first settlers and their immediate descendants that come into our story. The chief discrepancies between the two records on these people may be briefly noticed. Concerning the westernmost of these families, the Ere-dwellers, our saga only knows that Vestar Thorolfson brought his old father with him to Iceland, settled land east, or, as other recensions of it, probably more correctly, have it, west of Whalefirth, dwelt at Ere, and had a son, Asgeir, who dwelt there after him (ch. VII). But the "Landnama", ii. 9, knows that Vestar also had for wife Svana, daughter of Herrod, that he settled the lands of Ere and those of Kirkfirth, (1) and that he and his father were laid in howe at Pateness, so called, no doubt, after Vestar's father, whose name was Thorolf Bladderpate. Here our saga would seem to be an abbreviated record of "Landnama", which, at any rate in this case, has not drawn its information from the Ere-dwellers' story.

The nearest settler to Vestar on the east was Audun Stoti, who took to himself the lands of Lavafirth, and about whom "Landnama" has interesting things to relate. But in our story he is only mentioned in passing as the father-in-law to Thorlak Asgeirson of Ere (ch. XII), the reason being, no doubt, that he plays no part in any of the events related in the saga.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

In what our saga has to tell of Biorn the Easterner, the nearest eastern neighbour to Audun Stoti, it seems to be an independent record of "Landnama" altogether, and even partly. in conflict with it. Our saga makes Biorn remain with his father-in-law, Earl Kiallak of Jamtaland, till his death, and then go to Norway to take to himself his father's lands. By that time enmity had arisen between Hairfair and Flatneb, and the former had confiscated the latter's estates. Biorn drives the king's bailiffs away, and the latter has him declared outlaw throughout Norway under observance of lawful proceedings. But the "Landnama", though agreeing here as everywhere else with our saga as to the genealogy, makes Biorn overtake his father's lands, when the latter took command of the expedition against the Western Isles, and makes Hairfair, on hearing of Flatneb's defection, drive Biorn out of his patrimony. Both records seem independently derived from one common tradition. Biorn's nearest neighbour to the east was Thorolf Mostbeard. In the account of his emigration to Iceland our saga gives us fuller information than the "Landnama", which, for instance, knows nothing of Thorolf's consulting the oracle of Thor as to the advisability of either making peace with the king or leaving the land; nor does the "Landnama" give any description of his preparation for the journey, which is so graphically detailed in our saga (ch. IV). Much, on the other hand, of what the "Landnama" (ii. 12, p. 96–99) has to say about Thorolf and his son, Thorstein Codbiter, seems to be an abbreviated record of our saga (chs. ix., x.), and is clearly interpolated, since the story of the fight between Thorstein Codbiter and the Kiallekings is inserted into the story of Thorolf before Thorstein is even properly introduced as his son. This insertion is due to the later editors of "Landnama", of course.

By our saga it would seem that Thorolf Haltfoot came out to Iceland for the first time when he took up his abode with his mother, and fought the duel with Ulfar the Champion, but the "Landnama" states that he came first out with his mother, and together with her stayed the first winter at the house of his uncle, Geirrod of Ere, and the next spring went abroad again, and betook himself to viking business, from which he did not return till after the death of his mother (chap. ii, 13); this record also (chap. ii, 12) knows that Thorgeir, the son of Geirrod, was by-named Staple, Kengr, of which our saga, though mentioning Thorgeir as an ally of Codbiter in the Thing-fight, knows nothing.

On the other hand, it seems obvious that "Landnama"'s digression (ii 13, p. 101) with regard to the squabble between Arnbiorn of Combe and Thorleif Kimbi in Norway, with its sequel at the Thorsness Thing in Iceland, out of which eventually grew the fights at Swanfirth and Swordfirth, is an incorporation from our saga.

It will thus be seen that, while our saga depends on Ari entirely for its genealogy and chronology (see the chronological list at the end of the Preface), the biography of both records is derived either from a common tradition, or is one of interdependence between both.

As to the time, when our saga was written, two learned critics, Vigfusson, in the preface to his edition of it, 1864, pp. xii, xiii, and Konrad Maurer, "Germania", x. 487, 488, have limited the period within which it could have been penned to the thirty years between 1230–1260 (or 1262), chiefly on the following grounds. At the end of the story Gudny, Bodvar's daughter, the mother of the famous Sturlusons, is introduced as having witnessed the digging-up and transference to a new church of the bones of Snorri. Gudny died in 1221, and though it is not stated that she was dead, when the sagaman writes, we still gather the impression that it is tacitly given to be understood. Before the death of this lady, therefore, the saga could not have been written. On the other hand, we read in ch. IV, "To that temple must all men pay toll and be bound to follow the temple-priest in all farings, even as now are Thingmen of chiefs;" and further, in ch. X, "Then they moved the Thing up the ness (inn i nesit) where it now is." Further still, after the settlement of the blood-suit for Arnkel, which gave general dissatisfaction, the plaintiffs being only women, we are informed that, "The rulers of the land made this law, that for the time to come no woman and no man under sixteen winters old should be suitors in a blood-suit. And that law has ever been holden to since" (ch. XXXVIII).

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

These quotations prove really conclusively that in the author's time, and when he wrote down the saga, the old constitution of the commonwealth was still in full force: Thingmen owing the old allegiance to their gothi, or chief; Things being still under the jurisdiction of the gothar, and women being still excluded from being suitors in a bloodsuit, a restriction of woman's right unknown, as Maurer concisely puts it, to Norwegian law, and having no place in the two codes Jarnsitha and Jonsbok, the first codes introduced in Iceland after the subjection of the island to the Norwegian king. Hence it follows that our saga could not have been written down after the downfall of the constitution of the old commonwealth, 1262.

But we are of opinion that the limitation of the period within which our saga was written may be greatly narrowed yet.

Hitherto the critics have left untouched the question where our saga was written; but for the answer to that question it contains itself an important piece of evidence. First, it may be observed that the topography of our saga is so absolutely perfect, that the author in no single instance is ever at fault. Considering that the localities of the saga are to outsiders about the most intricate of all localities dealt with in Icelandic-sagas, on account of the many narrow and close-set arms of the sea that stretch into the littoral, it is obvious that an author who never fails in giving each its true bearing must have lived and moved in the locality itself.

In ch. VIII, p. 9, 20–22, of Vigfusson's edition, the latest and best, we read — "Arnkell het son hans, en Gunnfrithr dottir, er atti thorbeinir a thorbeinisstothum INN a Vatnshalsi inn fra Drapuhlith": his son was called Arnkel, but his daughter Gunnfrid, whom Thorbein of Thorbeinstead up on Waterneck east from Drapalithe had to wife (ch. VIII, of our trans.). Here it is obvious that the first "inn" gives the direction to Thorbeinstead from the place where the author was at the time he penned these words, just as the second "inn" gives the direction in which Thorbeinstead lies from Drapalithe.

Observe, that in this passage no event or movement from one named place to another named place is in question; but the case is one of stationary condition at both termini of the direction line, of which the terminus "a quo" is not named, and this is just what makes all the difference here. The first "inn" is not wanted for any topographical purpose; without it the statement would be just as clear and intelligible as it is with it; it only serves to throw light upon the bearing of the writer's home to Thorbeinstead, and has dropped from his pen unawares from the force of daily habit, and being an unconscious utterance becomes thereby all the more important in evidence.

Used for topographical purposes "inn" in our saga means: 1, east, if the direction be from west to east; 2, south, or up, when the starting-point of the direction is near the sea, and the objectpoint lies in a landward spot "on" or "east of" the meridian of the starting-point. When, therefore, the author penned the words in question, he unconsciously designated his spot as being either west or north of Thorbeinstead. We can think of no place west of Thorbeinstead likely to have been an "alma mater" of a saga writer; but north of it such a place is found at once in the monastery of Holyfell. (2) That we maintain is the very place to which the author of the Ere-dwellers' story points by his unconscious but fortunate slip.

The author of our story then, being an inmate of the monastery of Holyfell, it is interesting to inquire who among the community of that place in the period from 1221–1260 may be singled out as the likeliest for such a literary enterprise as the composition of a saga.

Out of the monastery of Flatey, which had been founded by Abbot Ogmund Kalfson, A.D. 1172, arose, on the transference of it over to the continent, the monastery of Holyfell, in 1184. The fourth abbot of the foundation was Hall Gizurson, who ruled the house for five years, 1221–1225, when he left the place, to take over the abbacy of Thicby, Thykkvibaer, in eastern Iceland, where he died 1230. He was the son of Gizur Hallson, who by his contemporaries was regarded as the most accomplished man in Iceland. This is the character given him by his younger contemporary, Sturla Thordson, the historian (1214–1284): "He was both

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

wise and eloquent; he was marshal to King Sigurd, the father of King Sverrir. Of all clerks who ever have been in Iceland, he was the best. Often he went abroad, and was more highly accounted of in Rome than any man of Iceland kin had ever been before him, by reason of his learning and doings. He knew much far and wide about the southern lands, and thereon he wrote the book which is called "Flos theregrinationis" (Sturlunga, ii 206). This Gizur was the grandson of that Teit, son of Bishop Isleif, who set up the school of Hawkdale, which was an outgrowth of the cathedral school of Skalaholt that his father had organized. Gizur seems in his time to have been the most influential man in Iceland, and was Logsofumathr, 1181–1200. His three sons were: Magnus, Bishop of Skalaholt, 1216–1236; Thorvald, the founder and first ruler of the monastery of Vithey, 1226–1235; and Hall, the Holyfell abbot. Hall must have received at the school of Hawkdale or Skalaholt the best education that was to be obtained in the land at that time. And it is clear that he must have enjoyed high esteem among his countrymen, since, when his father resigned the Speakership—at-law in 1200, Hall was elected his successor. He, however, resigned the office after nine years' tenure, and became a monk, which shows that studious life was more to his taste than the turmoil of public affairs. Among the congregation of Holyfell during the period within which the composition of "Eyrbyggja saga" must fall, there is, so far as we know, none to be named at all beside Hall as in the least likely to have undertaken the task. And since, on the author's own showing, the saga must have been composed at Holyfell, it is but an obvious inference that it must owe its existence to the only man who can be supposed to have written it. In point of time there are no obstacles at all in the way of the saga's having been written during the period of Hall's abbotship. Thus we consider that a strong case is established in favour of Abbot Hall Gizurson being indeed the author of "Eyrbyggja saga". Assuming such to be the case, we can regard Hall as a transplanter of the Skalaholt–Hawkdale school of learning to Holyfell, and thus Vigfusson's talk about the saga school of the Broadfirthers, which was somewhat distrustfully dealt with by Maurer twenty-seven years ago, finds a corroboration which Vigfusson himself never dreamt of.

It is abundantly evident, that the author of our saga had access to a library of sagas, which is saying as much as that the Ere-dwellers' story was put to writing in a monastery. This library he seems to have examined with the one main view of at least making note of everything which he found bearing on the life of the principal hero, Snorri. This research of his has led exactly to the result that was to be expected. While he seems entirely unacquainted with Snorri's important share in the terrible affairs of Nial and his sons, A.D. 1011–1012, and consequently had no "Nial's saga" to refer to; and was equally ignorant of Snorri's interest in the affairs of Grettir the Strong, hence had no "Grettir's saga" at hand; while, in fact, sagas not specially connected with the Westfirthers' quarter seem to have been beyond his reach; those that bore on men and matters of Broadfirth, and the Westland generally, he had pretty completely at his command. For the fifty years that Broadfirth had boasted of a seat of learning in the monastery of Flatey– Holyfell, when Hall Gizurson became abbot, we may be sure that the history of its highborn chieftains, some of whom were really great and noble men, had, in particular, arrested the attention of the brotherhood. And it may fairly be assumed that such a work as Brand the Learned's Breithfirthinga kynslóth (Broadfirthers' race) early found its way into the library of the monastery. Out of the sagas our author drew upon for information, he only mentions two by their titles, the saga of the Laxdalemen ("Laxdaela saga"), with the events of which Snorri was so intimately connected, and the saga of the Heath-slayings ("Heitharviga saga"), which, by a mistake, as it were (see Introduction to the Story of the Heath-slayings), spun itself out of Snorri's ignoble revenge for the killing of his wrong-doing father-in-law, Stir. It is not on that account, however, that our author brings in a mention of this saga, but he does it for the purpose of exhibiting Snorri's interest in Bardi, whose affairs, after the Heath-slaughters, but for Snorri's intervention, might have taken a very serious turn, not only for Bardi himself and his allies, but even for the general peace of the land.

Of unnamed sagas our author has known undoubtedly that of Thord the Yeller, which is mentioned as a special saga in "Landnama" (ii. 16); this is to be inferred, not only from the part that Thord takes in the affairs between the Thorsnessings and the Kiallekings, but especially from the reference (p. 18) the author makes to the constitutional law which Yeller carried through A.D. 965 (see vol. i, p. xxxi foll.), full thirty years later than the religious fight at Thorsness Thing took place. This, of all sagas, was the one that might be supposed

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

to have early formed an item of the library of the monastery of Holyfell.

The disjointed notices in chaps. XII and XIII about the slaying of Snorri's father, Thorgrim, by Gisli Surson; the marriage of Thordis, Snorri's mother, to Bork the Thick, and her attempt on the life of Eyolf the Gray, her brother's slayer, are clearly culled from the saga of Gisli Surson, the author contenting himself with incorporating only as much as directly bore on the life of Snorri. Not knowing Nial's saga, he was ignorant of the fact that Snorri himself, being taunted by Skarphedin for not having avenged his father, confessed that that was commonly thrown in his teeth ("Nial's saga", chap. cxix.); otherwise our author is fond of introducing notices at the expense of Snorri's courage.

In chap. XXIV, we come upon a short account of Eric the Red's voyage of discovery to Greenland. It stands in no connection with the thread of our story, and is inserted here apparently for no other reason than that Snorri is mentioned as agreeing to Stir's request to keep aloof from Eric's enemies and not to meddle in his affairs. The notice is interesting, showing that it is drawn from a saga of Eric the Red which now exists no more. The "Eric's saga" which we now have, knows nothing of Snorri as mixed up in the affairs of Eric the Red, and is, besides, an abstract of a longer saga of the Greenland discoverer, eked out by matter borrowed from the story of Thorfin Karlsefni (see Reeves, "Discovery of Vineland the Good", 1891, which affords excellent opportunity of comparing the two saga texts). (3)

In chap. XLVIII, we meet the abrupt statement that "Thorgils the Eagle was son of Hallstein, the Priest of Hallstein-ness, the thrall-owner," or, more literally, "who owned the thralls." In "Landnama" ii., xxiii., p. 131, mention is made of these thralls, and the additional information supplied that Hallstein had captured them in a war-raid on Scotland, and sent them out to the islands called Svefneyjar in Broadfirth, for the making of salt. About Hallstein there must once have existed a separate saga. Like his father and brother of Thorsness, he was of an intensely deep religious character, and, according to some accounts, sacrificed to Thor even his own son, that the god might deign to send him high-seat pillars, he himself having come from abroad to Iceland before he had become a householder. His prayer was heard, and Thor sent him a large tree, out of which he not only got his own high-seat pillars, but most houses in the "thwart bays" (those cutting into the northern littoral of Broadfirth) besides. Hallstein was a gothi of the Codfirthers (Thorskirthinga gothi), and of the Codfirth folk there is still extant a saga, "Thorskirthinga saga", also called the saga of Gold-Thorir (Gullthorir). But this is not the saga from which the incidents of Hallstein's life, in "Landnama" and in our story, are drawn. The Codfirther's saga, on the contrary, merely alludes to the sacrifice above-mentioned as a story commonly known, and knows nothing about the thralls. "Landnama"'s and our story's reference to Hallstein and his thralls is also only an allusion to what the authors of each record assume as a generally current tale. In the folklore of Iceland of the present day a slight tale is told of these slaves, to the effect that Hallstein came upon them one day sleeping, and hanged them ("Islenzkar thjothsogur, ii, 85). If the tale be a traditional descendant of other days, and not a later imaginative gloss on the statement of our saga or that of the "Landnama", then the original incident must have been of a nature to impress the hearers deeply. However that may be, it seems that our author has known a now lost saga of Hallstein Thorolfson.

Our author has drawn information as to Biorn the Champion of the Broadwickers from a saga about him which no longer exists, save for the fragments preserved in our story. Biorn's sojourn in Jomsburg, where evidently the title of Broadwickers' Champion was conferred on him, and his joining Styrbjorn, the Swedes' champion, in his ill-fated expedition against King Eric the Victorious, is nowhere mentioned, though many historical notices exist relating to Styrbjorn, and a special fragment setting forth the chief events of his life, and a particularly detailed description of the battle of Fyrisfield, where he fell ("Fornmannasogur", v. 245-251)^a

We have to deal with a pure romance in the account of Biorn's last voyage from Iceland (chap. XLVII, p. 134), and Gudleif's meeting with him in some unknown land (chap. LXIV). Biorn left Iceland when north-eastern winds prevailed mostly for a whole summer season, that is, till they, never changing (!), had

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

brought Biorn to his destination. Gudleif falls in with the same persistent gales west of Ireland, yet comes in spite of that to Biorn's country. Gudleif knows no name for the country, and apparently never was curious enough to ask about it: he falls in with a chiefly-looking person talking Icelandic, who refuses to tell his name, but is simple enough to question Gudleif mostly about people whom Biorn knew aforetime, and to send gifts to just the two persons he loved best in Iceland, with the naive declaration that they came from him "who was a greater friend of the goodwife of Frodis-water than of the Priest of Holyfell." It is an obvious matter that this was written after Thorfin Karlsefni's saga had made the Icelanders familiar with the geographical position of the North American continent. It may, of course, be derived from the lost saga of Biorn; but it must not be overlooked that chapters LXIII and LXIV of our saga occupy a peculiar position in the book. Our saga is really an unfinished work. For some reason or other it leaves the last eighteen years of Snorri's life a perfect blank. Did Abbot Hall, supposing he was the author, leave it in that state, on being transferred to Thickby? But however that may be, the fact is, that a gap of eighteen years there is at the end of the book between chapters LXII and LXV. This, we take it, struck someone as a drawback and a blemish, and so, not knowing what records to draw upon for further facts relating to Snorri, he dashed in those two chapters to round off the tale, the first dealing with an uncouth popular legend, the second securing for goodman Kiartan of Frodis-water a descent from a real ruler of men, an American gothi, in fact. The language of these chapters, however, appears in no marked manner to differ from the rest of the book, so they must be from a contemporary hand. It must be said in passing, however, that the Gudleif episode is of great beauty, and, together with the weird story of the bull Glossy, relieves the latter part of the saga from the reproach of dulness.

Superstition plays a very conspicuous part in our saga, and the folklore embodied in it bears witness to a very imaginative author. Touching in its serious simplicity is the heathen's belief in the holy purity of the spot which is regarded as the god's special habitation. In this respect the faith of the Thorsnessings is depicted in our saga in perfect harmony with what we know from elsewhere, about the northern heathen's ideal conception of the purity and delicacy of the personified powers of nature. In the edition of "Landnama" by Justice Hawk (iv, 7, p. 258), we read: "This was the beginning of the heathen laws, that men should not go to sea in figure-headed ships, but if they did so, they should remove the figure-head before they came in sight of land, nor should they sail up to the land with gaping heads or yawning snouts, lest the land-sprites should take fright thereat." Thorolf Mostbeard's injunction, "that no man unwashed should turn his eyes to Holyfell," proceeds evidently from the same high conception of the pure holiness of the supernatural powers he believed in.

But beside this charming phase of the heathen's belief, we have also the cruder forms of faith in sorcery, represented by Cunning Gils, Katla, Geirrid, and Thorgrima Witchface, in portents such as those of Frodis-water, in ghosts, such as Thorolf Halt-foot, Thorod Scatcatcher and his crew, Thorgunna, Stir, and the "revenants" of Frodis-water. In the case of Thrand the Strider we have the Christian churchman's idea of the cause to which the "hamremi", or preternatural strength, was due, which, like a fit, would seize the ancient heathen at moments when success or safety depended on desperate efforts. With the heathen this was heredity derived from trolls, with the Christian it was "devilhood" (p. 167). For folklore, a good deal of which seems to be derived from popular songs, the Ere-dwellers' story stands, beside the Grettir's story, pre-eminent among Icelandic sagas. It is evident that the author has been peculiarly fascinated with this kind of literature, realizing how genuinely national it was, and how well it lent itself to treatment by a good story-teller. The whole episode about Thorgunna, chaps. L-LV, forms a saga within a saga between two chapters which are inseparably connected.

As to the heathen cult, our story contains one of the most important records extant in the literature. The description of the Temple of Thor, built by Thorolf, is as graphic as it is significant, and may be regarded as a "locus classicus". There attaches to it the one drawback, that the author has left us in the dark as to the meaning and use of the "regin-naglar", gods' nails, a term which only occurs here, unless the nails that secured the stability of the high-seat pillars were so called. The temple description of our saga is most

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

interestingly supplemented by that of the temple of the "alsherjar-gothi" of Kjalarness, as given in the otherwise romancing "Kjalnesinga saga": "Thorgrim" (grandson of Ingolf Ernson, the first settler) "was a great sacrificer. He had a large temple reared in his homefield, one hundred feet long and sixty feet wide, whereunto all men (all his Thingmen) should pay temple-toll. There Thor was held in highest honour. From the inner end thereof there was a building in the shape of a cap. The temple was arrayed with hangings, and had windows all round. There Thor stood in the middle, and on either hand the other gods. In front thereof (i.e., of the row of the idols) was a stall wrought with great cunning, and lined at the top with iron, whereon there should burn a fire that must never go out; that they called a hallowed fire." Here then, in respect of architectural form, we have the interesting detail given, that the building, which corresponds to that additional room, which in the temple of Thorsness was built to the inner end of it, "of that fashion whereof now is the choir of a church," was in the shape of a "cap". The form of the public temple of Keelness cannot be traced now. But at the homestead of Thyriill, some ten miles distant from the spot where the temple of Keelness must have stood, there have been laid bare of late years the ruins of a "blot-hus", house of sacrifice, private temple, which we know from "Hord Grimkelson's saga" ("Islendinga sogur", 1847, ii, pp. 109–10), existed in the latter part of the tenth century, at which even its devout owner, Thorstein Goldnob, was slain in October, 986. This private temple was, though not in size, in shape undoubtedly, modelled on the public temple of Keelness. The excavated ground-plan shows clearly that at one end a semicircular chamber was built, divided from the main building by a party wall. It was, in fact, the apse of the temple, appropriately termed by the Icelanders "hufa"= cap. A nave with a walled-off apse seems to have been the general form of the heathen temples of Iceland.

In its account of the temple rites our saga agrees closely with other existing records. Thus, again, the "Keelnessings' saga" states that on the stall should lie a stout ring made of silver, which the temple-priest should wear on his arm at all man-motes; thereon should all oaths be taken in matters relating to ordeal cases. On that stall, too, there should stand a bowl of copper, a large one, wherein should be poured all the blood which flowed from animals given to Thor, or to men, which blood they called "hlaut", and the bowl "hlautbolli". The "hlaut" should be sprinkled over the folk and beasts; but the wealth which was paid to the temple should be used for the entertainment of men, when sacrificial feasts were held. But those men whom they sacrificed should be hurled into that fen which was outside by the door, which fen they called the pit of sacrifice ("Keelnessings' saga", ch. ii).

A third record relating to the temple rites we have in Hawk the Justice's edition of "Landnama", iv, ch. 7, pp. 258–59: "A ring, weighing two or more (var. lec. twenty) ounces should lie on the stall in every head-temple; that ring each gothi should wear on his arm at all Things prescribed by law, such as he was bound to hold himself, having first reddened it in the blood of a neat which he himself had sacrificed there. Any man who had there to do business as by law provided before the court, should first deliver an oath on that ring, and name to himself two witnesses or more, saying these words: I call witnesses thereunto that I take oath on ring, a lawful oath, so help me Frey and Niord and the Almighty god, as I shall this case plead or defend, or witness bear, or verdicts give, or dooms deliver, according as I know rightest and truest and ratherest lawful, and all lawful deeds out of hand turn such as unto my share fall while I be at this Thing.... There were men chosen to ward the temples even according to their wisdom and righteousness; even they should name judges at the Things, and rule the pleading of cases; hence were they called gothar. Every man should pay toll to temple, even as tithes to churches now."

"Hlaut," n., by its root-vowel, belongs to the gradation series jo (ju, u) –au –u –o, and stands to "hljota", as "skaut", n., offshoot, skirt, to "skjota", "saup", n., sip-meat, to "supa", "staup", n., what of more or less solid nature is turned out of a stoup, to "stupa"; and since "hljota" means to come by lot, to come in for as a share, "hlaut" seems simply to mean the blood-lot (collectively speaking) which was kept in the bowl to from the sprinkler fall to every worshipper's share. Accordingly, "hlaut-teinn" would mean allotment rod, distributing rod, sprinkler.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

The ring figures here, as elsewhere throughout its interesting history, as an emblem of unity — the unity in one person of two distinct functions: pontifical supremacy in things religious, lordly supremacy in matters of state.

Finally, one word about our treatment of the songs of these sagas. We have dealt with them even more literally than those of the sagas of the first volume. We have endeavoured to allow to the "kenningar" or periphrastic expressions the same force in the translation as they bear in the original; but considering that this method must necessarily carry with it a certain amount of obscurity to a modern reader, we have drawn up a list, under the heading Poetical periphrasis in Index III., "Subject-matter," of all these kenningar in a way we thought would recommend itself best to students and general readers alike. Our translation of the songs of the Ere-dwellers' saga is based on Vigfusson's prose arrangement of the same at the end of his edition of that saga, those of the "Heathslayings' saga" on Jon Thorkelsson's explanation in "Skyringar a visum i nokkurum islenskum sogum, Reykjavik, 1868."

The chronological list for the Ere-dwellers' story follows in all essential points Vigfusson's table at the end of his edition; for the Heath-slayings' story we have followed his Timatal (excepting the date of the Heath-battle), not because we think it sound, but because it is the accepted chronology at present, as indeed it was long before he wrote.

Genealogical tables have been added in order to facilitate the perusal of the book.

An abstract of the Ere-dwellers' story, in English, by Walter Scott, was published in "Illustrations of Northern Antiquities", 1813, pp. 475–513, reprinted in P. Blackwell's "Northern Antiquities", 1847, pp. 517–540. — Of the Lay of the Mewlithers there is found what is meant for a translation into English, in the "Corpus Poeticum", vol. ii, pp. 58–60.

ENDNOTES:

- (1) Vestar's nearest neighbour to the west was Heriolf, son of Sigurd Swinehead, and he, according to "Landnama", took land between Bulands-head and Kirkjufjorthr, Kirkfirth (ii. 9, p. 91). This, according to "Landnama"'s constant method, means that Heriolf made his own the western, Vestar the eastern littoral of this firth, the natural boundary between their landtakes being the river, or one of the rivers, formed by the watershed of the valley which stretched inland up from the bottom of the bay. The locality of this bay is much in dispute. The name itself cannot be the original one, for both the neighbouring settlers were heathens, coming from Norway. That the description of the landtake of these two settlers is due to Ari the Learned seems removed beyond all doubt. He descended from the Broadfirthers, lived the first seven years of his life at Holyfell, and spent, in all probability, the largest part of it in the Snowfellness district. He must, therefore, have had it on good authority that the landtakes of the two settlers met in Kirkfirth. Now the firth meant by "Landnama" seems to be none other than the broadest bay on the northern littoral of Snowfellness, now called Grundarfjorthr (Groundfirth), the name being derived from a homestead at the bottom of it called Grund. This name of the bay, however, does not occur in the "Landnama", nor in any of the sagas, and yet it is

Story of the Ere–Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

old, being found in an index of Icelandic bays dating from about 1300, where Kirkjufjörth and Grundarfjörth are entered as two separate bays (Kalund, ii. 359–72; Sturlunga, ii. 474). On the western side of Grundarfjörth there are localities named from Kirkja, such as Kirkjufell (Kirkfell), a name given both to a mountain and a homestead there; and it seems but natural that he, who first gave this name to the mountain and the homestead, gave also the name Kirkjufjörth to the bay, which Kirkfell mountain bounds by the west. Kalund is inclined, on account of the two separate entries in the above–mentioned index, to see Kirkjufjörth in one or other of the two small creeks that cut in on either side of the peninsula–formed mountain of Kirkjufell, but both seem too insignificant for a natural boundary of landtakes. The most natural construction of the "Landnama" text is, that Vestar, who took to himself the peninsula called Onward–Ere (short: Ere), on the eastern side of Grundarfjörth, let its western boundary be the river that runs into the easternmost bight of the bottom of the bay, and that Heriolf's landtake began on the western bank of that river. But this assumption involves, first, that the original name of Grundarfjörth was either lost, or was indeed Grundarfjörth until a Christian called it Kirkjufjörth; that the latter name prevailed for a while, till it again gave way to the original Grundarfjörth, and that later on people made out of two names for one and the same firth two different firths. That so considerable a bay as Grundarfjörth should not be mentioned or noticed at all in "Landnama" is, in the highest degree, improbable.

(2) To this day the people of the all but sea–locked Thorsness invariably use the preposition "inn" to define the direction from the ness south or up to the inland localities of the parish of Holyfell, Helgafells–sveit, which lie on or east of the meridian of the ness: "fara inn ath Drapuhlith, inn f sveit, inn ath Ulfarsfelli" = to fare in to, up to Drapalithe, in to or up into the parish, up to Ulfarsfell, etc.

(3) Recent scholarship on the Vinland Sagas, however, has taken the opposite view, placing "Greenlanders Saga" in a position older (and hence, probably more accurate) than "Erik the Red's Saga". See p 29–35, Introduction to "The Vinland Sagas" (trans: Magnus Magnusson Hermann Poulsson, Penguin Classics, 1965). — DBK.

Chapter 1. Herein Is Told How Ketil Flatneb Fares To West–Over–Sea.

Ketil Flatneb was hight a famous hersir (1) in Norway; he was the son of Biorn Rough–foot, the son of Grim, a hersir of Sogn. Ketil Flatneb was a wedded man; he had to wife Yngvild, daughter of Ketil Wether, a hersir of Raumarik; Biorn and Helgi were hight their sons, but their daughters were these, Auth the Deep–minded, Thorun the Horned, and Jorun Manwitbrent. Biorn, the son of Ketil, was fostered east in Iamtaland with that earl who was called Kiallak, a wise man, and most renowned; he had a son whose name was Biorn, and a daughter hight Giaflaug. That was in the days when King Harald Hairfair came to the rule of Norway. Because of that unpeace many noble men fled from their lands out of Norway; some east over the Keel, some West–over–the–sea. Some there were withal who in winter kept themselves in the South–isles, or the Orkneys, but in summer harried in Norway and wrought much scathe in the kingdom of Harald the king.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Now the bonders bemoaned them of that to the king, and prayed him deliver them from that unpeace. Then Harald the king took such rede that he caused dight an army for West-over-the-sea, and said that Ketil Flatneb should be captain of that host. Ketil begged off therefrom, but the king said he must needs go; and when Ketil saw that the king would have his will, he betook himself to the faring, and had with him his wife and those of his children who were at home. But when Ketil came West-over-the-sea, some deal of fighting had he and his, and ever got the victory. He laid under him the South-isles, and made himself chief over them. Then he made peace with the mightiest chiefs West-over-the-sea, and made alliances with them, and therewithal sent the army back east. But when they met Harald the king, they said that Ketil Flatneb was lord of the South-isles, but that they wotted not if he would drag the rule west of the sea to King Harald. But when the king knew that, he took to himself those lands that Ketil owned in Norway.

Ketil Flatneb gave his daughter Auth to Olaf the White, who at that time was the greatest war-king West-over-the-sea; he was the son of Ingiald, the son of Helgi; but the mother of Ingiald was Thora, the daughter of Sigurd Worm-in-eye, the son of Ragnar Hairy-breeks. (2) Thorun the Horned he gave in wedlock to Helgi the Lean, the son of Eyvind the Eastman and Rafarta, the daughter of Kiarfal, King of the Irish.

Chapter 2. Of Biorn Ketilson and Thorolf Most-Beard.

Biorn the son of Ketil Flatneb was in Iamtaland till Kiallak the earl died; he gat to wife Giaflaug the earl's daughter, and thereafter fared west over the Keel, first to Thrandheim and then south through the land, and took to himself those lands which his father had owned, and drove away the bailiffs that King Harald had set over them. King Harald was in the Wick when he heard that, and thereon he fared by the inland road north to Thrandheim, and when he came there he summoned an eight-folks' mote; (3) and at that mote he made Biorn Ketilson outlaw from Norway, a man to be slain or taken wheresoever he might be found. Thereafter he sent Hawk High-breeks and other of his warriors to slay him if they might find him. But when they came south beyond Stath, the friends of Biorn became ware of their journey and sent him tidings thereof. Then Biorn got him aboard a bark which he owned, with his household and chattels, and fled away south along the land, because that this was in the heart of winter, and he durst not make for the main. Biorn fared on till he came to the island called Most which lies off South-Hordaland, and there a man hight Rolf took him in, who was the son of Ornolf the Fish-driver. There lay Biorn privily the winter through. But the king's men turned back when they had settled Biorn's lands and set men over them.

Chapter 3. Thorolf Most-Beard Outlawed By King Harald Hairfair.

Rolf was a mighty chief, and a man of the greatest largesse; he had the ward of Thor's temple there in the island, and was a great friend of Thor. And therefore he was called Thorolf. (4) He was a big man and a strong, fair to look on, and had a great beard; therefore was he called Most-beard, and he was the noblest man in the island.

In the spring Thorolf gave Biorn a good long-ship manned with a doughty crew, and gave him Hallstein his son to bear him fellowship; and therewith they sailed West-over-the-sea to meet Biorn's kindred.

But when King Harald knew that Thorolf Mostbeard had harboured Biorn Ketilson the king's outlaw, then sent he men to see him and bade him begone from his lands, and fare as an outlaw even as Biorn his friend, but if he come and meet the king and lay the whole matter in his hand. This was ten winters after Ingolf Arnarson (5) had fared out to take up his abode in Iceland, and that faring was grown to be very famous, because that those men who came out from Iceland told of good choice of land therein.

Chapter 4. Thorolf Most-Beard Comes Out To Iceland, And Sets Up House There.

Thorolf Most-Beard made a great sacrifice, and asked of Thor his well-beloved friend whether he should make peace with the king, or get him gone from out the land and seek other fortunes. But the Word showed Thorolf to Iceland; and thereafter he got for himself a great ship meet for the main, and trimmed it for the Iceland-faring, and had with him his kindred and his household goods; and many friends of his betook themselves to faring with him. He pulled down the temple, and had with him most of the timbers which had been therein, and mould moreover from under the stall whereon Thor had sat.

Thereafter Thorolf sailed into the main sea, and had wind at will, and made land, and sailed south along and west about Reekness, and then fell the wind, and they saw that two big bights cut into the land. (6)

Then Thorolf cast overboard the pillars of his high-seat, which had been in the temple, and on one of them was Thor carven; (7) withal he spake over them, that there he would abide in Iceland, whereas Thor should let those pillars come a-land.

But when they drifted from off the ship they were borne towards the westernmost firth in sight, and folk deemed that they went in sooth no slower than might have been looked for.

After that came a sea breeze, and they sailed west about Snowfellsness and stood into the firth. There see they that the firth is mighty broad and long, with great fells rising on either side thereof. Then Thorolf gave name to the firth and called it Broadfirth. He took land on the south side of the firth, nigh the midmost, and laid his ship in the creek, which thereafter they called Templewick.

Thereafter they espied the land and found on the outermost point of a ness north of the bay that Thor was come a-land with the pillars. That was afterwards called Thorsness.

Thereafter Thorolf fared with fire through his land (8) out from Staff-river in the west, and east to that river which is now called Thors-river, (9) and settled his shipmates there. (10) But he set up for himself a great house at Templewick which he called Templestead. There he let build a temple, and a mighty house it was. There was a door in the side-wall and nearer to one end thereof. Within the door stood the pillars of the high-seat, and nails were therein; they were called the Gods' nails. Therewithin was there a great frith-place. But off the inmost house was there another house, of that fashion whereof now is the choir of a church, and there stood a stall in the midst of the floor in the fashion of an altar, and thereon lay a ring without a join that weighed twenty ounces, and on that must men swear all oaths; and that ring must the chief have on his arm at all man-motes.

On the stall should also stand the blood-bowl, and therein the blood-rod was, like unto a sprinkler, and therewith should be sprinkled from the bowl that blood which is called "Hlaut", which was that kind of blood which flowed when those beasts were smitten who were sacrificed to the Gods. But round about the stall were the Gods arrayed in the Holy Place.

To that temple must all men pay toll, and be bound to follow the temple-priest in all farings even as now are the thingmen of chiefs. But the chief must uphold the temple at his own charges, so that it should not go to waste, and hold therein feasts of sacrifice.

Now Thorolf called that ness Thorsness which lieth between Swordfirth and Templewick; on the ness is a fell, and that fell Thorolf held in such worship that he laid down that no man unwashed should turn his eyes thither, and that nought should be done to death on the fell, either man or beast, until it went therefrom of its

own will. That fell he called Holy Fell, (11) and he trowed that thither he should fare when he died, and all his kindred from the ness. On the tongue of the ness whereas Thor had come a-land he made all dooms be held, and thereon he set up a county Thing.

And so holy a place that was, that he would nowise that men should defile the field with blood-shedding, and moreover none should go thither for their needs, but to that end was appointed a skerry called Dirts Kerry.

Now Thorolf waxed of great largesse in his housekeeping, and had many men about him; for in those days meat was good to get both from the isles and from the take of the sea.

Chapter 5. Biorn Ketilson Comes West-Over-The-Sea, But Will Not Abide There.

Now must we tell of Biorn, the son of Ketil Flatneb, that he sailed West-over-the-sea when he and Thorolf Most-beard sundered as is aforesaid.

He made for the South-isles; but when he came West-over-the-sea, then was Ketil Flatneb his father dead, but he found there Helgi his brother and his sisters, and they offered him good entertainment with them.

But Biorn saw that they had another troth, and nowise manly it seemed to him that they had cast off the faith that their kin had held; and he had no heart to dwell therein, and would not take up his abode there. Yet was he the winter through with Auth his sister and Thorstein her son.

But when they found that he would not be at one with his kindred, they called him Biorn the Easterner, (12) and deemed it ill that he would not abide there.

ENDNOTES:

(1) "HERSIR" we have left untranslated because we know no English term whereby to render it properly. That it is derived from "herr", a collective noun meaning multitude of people, cannot be doubted. The termination "-sir" is indicative of the agent, and here would originally point to the agent as ruler, commander, gatherer together. In support of this is the word "hersing", a collected multitude, crowd. In time the hersir became not only ruler of men, but a lord of the territory within which his herr had its habitation, which territory was called "herath", and only in the capacity of such a territorial lord the historical hersir is known. Before the days of Harold Hairfair he appears to have been an independent kinglest or tribal chief, who in his person with the secular sway over his people combined the sacerdotal office of pontifex maximus. After Hairfair's day the hersir was reduced to a royal liegeman, and between him and the king there was set up a new dignity, that of the earl, to whom jurisdiction over so and so many hersar was assigned. The Icelandic "Gothi" was another form of the hersir of Norway, but the title hersir could not be used, because in Iceland "herath" as a lordship with definite boundaries never existed; there it merely signified country-side, district. Thus, while in Norway the title of hersir pointed especially to the secular character of the ruler of men in a defined herath, in Iceland the title of Gothi indicated in particular such a person's sacerdotal quality.

(2) "Ketil Flatneb gave his daughter Aud to Olaf the White, who at that time was the greatest war-king west-over-the-sea; he was the son of Ingjald the son of Helgi, but the mother of Ingjald was Thora, the daughter of Sigurd Worm-in-eye, the son of Ragnar Hairy-breeks." We have here an instance of the manner in which Icelandic aristocrats would connect their ancestors, of the period prior to the settlement, with famous legendary royal races, such as the Ynglings of Sweden and Norway, or heroes such as Ragnar Hairy-breeks, or Sigurd the Volsung. The descent of Olaf the White, as our story has it, is evidently due to Ari the Learned, because, so far as it goes, it agrees both with his "Islendingabok", ch. 12, and with

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

"Landnama", ii, ch. 15, and, most probably, the notice about the mother's kindred of Ingjald is due to the same source, namely, the lost greater "Islendingabok" of Ari, of which the one now existing is confessedly an abridgment. In a contemporary Irish record, "Three Fragments" ed. by O'Donovan, 1860, pp. 127, 195, which scholars agree in regarding as generally a trustworthy source for Irish history, the descent of Olaf is also given, and, as the following table shows, there is an irreconcilable discrepancy between the two sources:

Irish record	Icelandic Record
Halfdan Whiteleg, King of Upland	Sigurd Ring, a king of the Wick, in Norway
 Godfred	 Gudrod Ragnar Hairy-breeks
 Godfred	 Olaf Sigurd Worm-in-eye
 Ragnall	 Helgi married Thora
 Godfred	 Ingjald
 Olaf (no surname)	 Olaf the White m. Aud

By the Icelandic family-tree Aud and her numerous kindred in Broadfirth united in their veins all the blue blood of antiquity. But in that respect it is an awkward circumstance, that the Irish record does not know Aud as a wife of Olaf at all, but says that he was married to the daughter of King Aedh of Ireland, the successor of Maelsechlainn, which lady's name, however, it does not give. Both the great historical critics, Johannes Steenstrup (*Normannerne*, ii, 120–121, 374–375), and Gustav Storm (*Kritiske Bidrag til Vikingetidens Historie*, 119), agree in rejecting the Icelandic genealogy of Olaf the Dublin king, and accepting the Irish.

(3) "He fared by the inland road north to Thrandheim, and when he came there, he summoned an eight folks' mote." This assembly consequently consisted of spokesmen from the eight folks (fylki), which formed the political as well as the geographical extent of what, for want of a better name, we might perhaps term the province of Thrandheim. These eight folks were, taken in order of their geographical position, from south to north: the folk of Orkdale (Orkdaela-fylki); of Gauldale (Gauldaela-f.); of Strind (Strinda-f.); of Stiordale (Stjordaela-f.); of Skaun (Skeyna-f.); of Verdale (Verdaela-f.); of Spar-biders (Sparbyggja-f.); of Aun (Eyna-f.). All these folks had their common folk-mote at the Thing of Eres (Eyrathing) within the site of the present city of Drontheim.

(4) "He had the ward of Thor's temple there in the island, and was a great friend of Thor. And therefore was he called Thorolf." In all probability the case with Rolf had been the same as with his kinsmen, that, when he was dedicated to his tutelary god, his name was lengthened by adding Thor's name to it. His own son, who first was called Stein, he dedicates to Thor under the name of Thorstein (Chapter VII). Thorstein again had a son, called Grim, who on being given by the father to Thor, was named Thorgrim. That it was a common custom to give to children the name of a god, is attested to by Snorri in *Ynglinga Saga*, ch. 7: "From Odin's name was derived the name of Audunn, and in that manner men gave names to their sons. But by Thor's name is called he who hights Thorir or Thorarin, or other names may be added thereto, as Stein-Thor or Haf-Thor with alterations in sundry other ways." Another record, *Hauksbók*, says: "Men of lore say, that it was the custom of ancient folk to derive the names of their sons or daughters from names of the gods, as Thorolf or Thorstein or Thorgrim from the name of Thor; so he who first hight Odd was from Thor named Thorod, even as Thormod sang of Snorri the Priest and his son Odd, whom he (Snorri) called Thorod; such, too, is the case with Thorberg, Thoralf, Thorleif, Thorgeir; and yet more names are derived from the names of the gods, though most be so from that of Thor. In those days men were much in the wont of having two names, for that was thought most likely to lengthen life and give good luck; even should some folk curse them by the name of the gods, this was held to be of no scathe since they had another name (to trust in),"

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

from Biorn of Skardsa's "Anall eptir Hauksbok, AM. 115, 8vo., printed as "2 Anhang" to "Eyrbyggja Saga", ed. Vigfusson, 1864). If proof were wanted to show how, beyond all comparison, Thor was the most popular deity with the heathen Icelander, a reference to the index of personal names in our saga, and, for that matter, in all Icelandic sagas, will suffice. Even in the present day Thor is, in this respect, beaten in the record by only one saint — St. John.

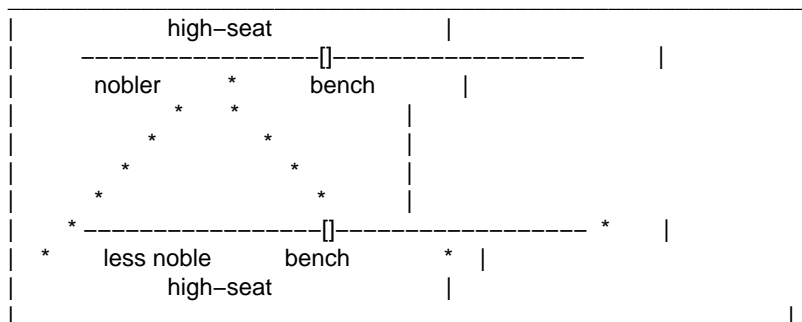
(5) Read Ingolf Ernsen.

(6) "They saw that two big bights cut into the land." We have added the word "two", which is required both by situation and context. The edition reads ^a "sa their at skarust i landit inn firthir storir." The older reading, we take it, was: "sa their at skarust i landit inj firthir storir," and that an inadvertent scribe made of inj = inn ii, i.e., inn tveir (two), simply inn. Our conjecture is borne out by the text itself, which in line 28 says: "they" (the pillars) "were borne towards the westernmost firth," "sveif them til ens vestra fjartharins", where the comparative, in connection with the definite article, makes it quite clear, that the westernmost firth was one of two firths already mentioned in the text. This is also proved by the position of the ship. It must have been on the latitude of Snowfellness; it had passed Reekness, the southern boundary of Faxebay, and now had in view the mountain ranges which formed the southern and northern littoral of Broadfirth. These two are the only big bights that cut into western Iceland, and no other bight or bay could be seen from on board Thorolf's ship.

(7) "Thorolf cast overboard the pillars of his high-seat... and on one of them was Thor carven." This is a general custom with the oldest settlers of Iceland while the island was still altogether, or to a great extent, a no man's land; but among the later settlers it gave way to other methods of land-take, when land was obtained under one form or another of contract. Ingolf Ernsen, the first settler, set the example, and so strong was his faith in the fortune that would be in store for his kindred if he settled where his high-seat pillars should come a-land, that for three years he searched for them, and having passed through the best parts of the southern country, did not hesitate to plant his abode on the barren ness where, at last, the pillars were found ("Landnama", i. 7–8). It is even related that a settler hearing, after ten or fifteen years, of the discovery of his high-seat pillars at the opposite end of the land, sold his estates, and took up his abode where they were found, though that was within the land-take of another settler ("Landnama", ib.). Hallstein, son of Thorolf Mostbeard, who came to Iceland before he had become a householder (ch. vi.), and therefore had no high-seat pillars to plant in a new house of his own, made a vow to Thor, the family god, that he would deign to send him "high-seat pillars". Whereupon a tree drifted upon his land which was "sixty-three ells long and two fathoms round", and out of that he made high-seat pillars for himself, and supplied material for the same to "almost every house throughout the byfirths," the firths that cut into the northern littoral of Broadfirth ("Landnama", ii. 23). There is a large number of instances relating to the high-seat pillars in connection with land-take in Iceland which we cannot enumerate here. Let it suffice to refer the reader especially to the "Landnamabok (Ingimund the Old, iii. 2; Crow (Kraku)–Hreidar, iii. 7; Lodmund the Old, iv. 5; Thorhad the Old, iv. 6; Hrollaug Rognwaldson, iv. 9, etc.), and for the solitary instance of a chief buried at sea on the voyage to Iceland, performing the function of Thor's pillars, to "Egilsaga", ch. xxvii. The high-seat itself (ondvegi) was at this time arrayed in the middle of one of the side-benches of the hall; there was the chieftain's seat proper, on the nobler bench (ondvegi at aethra bekk), and the high-seat on the less noble bench (ondvegi a uaethra bekk), each facing the other. Of the term "ondvegi" no satisfactory etymology has yet been found, nor is likely to be, until a misconception of long standing concerning the position of the wall against which it had its place is removed. In the story of Olaf the Quiet, King of Norway, 1066–93, it is stated, that in his day the high-seat in Norwegian halls was removed from the side wall to the dais at the inner gable end. The sagaman adds, that heretofore the highseat proper, or the king's seat, always must "face the sun" ("Fornmannasogur", vi. 439–40). From this it has been inferred that the high-seat always was on the northern side-bench of a hall, and that inference proceeds from the idea that the hall always turned east and west, which is obviously out of question. The front of a hall was always that one of its side-walls on which were the two doors with which halls with the high-seats on the side-benches were furnished. Built on the sea

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

or lake shore, on the bank of a river, or on the underland of valleys, the front of the hall ran parallel with the line of the shore, and the course of the running water, and, where these determining causes were not present, with the line of the highway. Consequently, its front could face at a right angle any point of the compass, whereby then it is given that with the high-seat bench the case was the same. In a sword-age, when halls were built just as much for defensive purposes as for the comfort of the inmates, it stands obviously to reason, that the chief's seat should be planted where he could most easily command the view of the two weakest points of his stronghold, the two doors. That point was the middle seat on the bench which ran along the wall that was opposite to that through which the doors led into the hall. On that bench, therefore, we take it, the high-seat was always found. This diagram shows the position of the high-seat, and its bearing towards the doors.



With regard to the derivation of "ondvegi" we can offer but a slight hint: "ond" may be the term "ond" = porch, entrance hall, or the mutated adv. "and-" = against, opposite (so the Oxford Dictionary), as in "ond-verthr", onward; "vegi", which sometimes goes into "ugi", as "verthr" into "urthr", seems to be a collective neuter, formed from "vegr", way (cf. -menni from mann-, thythi from thjoth, birki, bjork, etc., etc.), and should thus mean "ways". If we suppose that here, as in innumerable other instances in Icelandic, the noun which everyone had always in mind in speaking, was left out, namely, "saeti", seat, so that "ondvegi" stood instead of "ondvegis saeti", then we should have a perfectly intelligible expression for "the seat, where the two ways met that lead up to the chief from either "ond" or door.

(8) "Thorolf fared with fire through his land." See vol. i., xliwxlvi.

(9) "Which is now called Thorsriver;" so the old edition. We now prefer the reading of the last edition: "Which he called."

(10) "Settled his shipmates there." The original expression, "bygthi thar skipverjum sinum", is more technical: he gave lands to his crew, whom he made his tenants. For an exhaustive account of the various relations between various kinds of tenants and their land-settling landlords, see K. Maurer, "Entstehung des islandischen Staats".

(11) "That fell he called Holy Fell, and trowed that thither he should fare when he died and all his kindred from the ness." This belief in an earthly paradise after death seems to have been chiefly confined to the Broadfirth folk. The "Landnama", on the authority of the lost saga of Thord the Yeller, records that the kindred of Aud the Deep-minded shared this belief with the Thorsnessings. "She worshipped at Cross-knolls, where she had crosses raised up became she was baptized and truly Christian. Her kindred afterwards had great worship for those knolls, and a temple was reared there when the service of sacrifice began to be done, and they trowed that they would die into the knolls, and therein was Thord the Yeller laid (buried) before he (*) took up his chiefship as is told in his story." -- Landnama ii 16, p. 111. Of Sel-Thorir, too, who, on his journey for the family abode which a mermaid had ordered to be planted where Thorir's mare, Skalm, should lie down under her loads, had lived for a year among the Broadfirth settlers, the

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

"Landnama" (ii, 5) says, that he and his heathen kindred died into the Rocks of Thor (Thorsbjorg). See endnote 1 to Chapter XXVIII. (*) This "he" must refer to Thord the Yeller's son, Eyolf the Gray, and the "Landnama" passage must owe its senseless statement to the fact that the scribe did not know the sense of leitha = to bury, which, however, is a well-established one, e.g., Steinar's burying of his slave, Grani: "Steinar leiddi hann thar upp i holtunum" = Steinar buried him there up in = among the hillocks. "Egilsaga", ch. 84. His story, of course, means Thord the Yeller's saga.

(12) "They called him Biorn the Easterner." We have rendered "hinn austræni" by "easterner" as the nearest term we could think of. But it does not express the full sense of "austrænn" here. Biorn found fault with his kinsmen for having changed their old faith for Christianity, and was so disgusted therewith that he had no heart to abide among them. This was the cause of their conferring on him the nickname, as the saga expressly states. Vigfusson, in Timatal, 224; supposes the reason of the giving of the surname to have been, that he alone of his kindred was left for some time behind in Norway; but there is no need of that explanation in face of the clear record of the story. The sense of "austrænn", therefore, is Easterner, in the sense of Eastern-minded, wilfully clinging to Eastern follies (of Paganism); -raenn, therefore, conveys in this name the same sense as -raenn in einraenn, self-willed, whimsical, in both ancient and modern use of the word.

Chapter 6. Biorn Comes Out To Iceland.

Biorn was two winters in the South-isles before he dight him to fare to Iceland; with him in that faring was Hallstein Thorolfson; and they made haven at Broadfirth, and took land out from Staff-river, betwixt that and Lavafirth, by Thorolf's rede. Biorn dwelt at Burgholt in Bearhaven, and he was the most noble-hearted of men.

Hallstein, the son of Thorolf, deemed it less than manly to take land at the hands of his father; so he fared west over Broadfirth, and there took to himself land, and dwelt at Hallsteinsness.

Certain winters thereafter came out Auth the Deep-minded; and the first winter she was with Biorn her brother, but afterwards she made her own all the Dale-lands in Broadfirth between Skraumuhlaups-river and Daymeal-water, and dwelt at Hvamm.

In those days was all Broadfirth settled; but little need there is to speak of the land-taking of those men who come not into the story.

Chapter 7. Of The Kin Of Kiallak.

There was a man hight Geirrood who took land from Thors-river eastward unto Longdale, and dwelt at Ere; with him came out Ulfar the Champion, to whom Geirrood gave lands round about Ulfar's-fell; with him too came Fingeir, son of Thorstein Snowshoe. He dwelt in Swanfirth, and his son was Thorfin, the father of Thorbrand of Swanfirth.

There was a man hight Vestar, son of Thorolf Bladderpate; he brought to Iceland his father, a man well on in years, and took land west away from Whalefirth, and dwelt at Onward-ere. His son was Asgeir, who dwelt there afterwards.

Biorn the Easterner died the first of these land-settlers, and was buried at Burgbrook. He left behind two sons: one was Kiallak the Old, who dwelt at Bearhaven after his father. Kiallak had to wife Astrid, daughter of Rolf the Hersir, and sister of Steinolf the Low. They had three children: Thorgrim the Priest was a son of theirs, and their daughter was Gerd, she whom Thorrood the Priest, son of Odd the Strong, had to wife; their third child was Helga, whom Asgeir of Ere had to wife.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

From the children of Kiallak is sprung a great kindred, which is called the Kiallekings.

Ottar was the name of another son of Biorn; he married Gro, the daughter of Geirleif of Bardstrand. Their sons were these: Helgi, the father of Osvif the Wise, and Biorn, the father of Vigfus of Drapalith; but Vilgeir was the third son of Ottar Biornson.

Thorolf Most-beard married in his old age, and had to wife her who is called Unn; some say that she was daughter of Thorstein the Red, but Ari the Learned, son of Thorgils, numbers her not among his children. Thorolf and Unn had a son who was called Stein; that lad Thorolf gave to Thor his friend, and called him Thorstein, and the boy was very quick of growth.

Now Hallstein Thorolfson had to wife Osk, daughter of Thorstein the Red; Thorstein was their son; he was fostered at Thorolf's, and was called Thorstein the Swart; but his own son Thorolf called Thorstein Codbiter.

Chapter 8. Of Thorolf Halt-Foot.

In those days came out Geirrid, the sister of Geirrod of Ere, and he gave her dwelling in Burgdale up from Swanfirth. She let build her hall athwart the highway, and all men should ride through it who passed by. Therein stood ever a table, and meat to be given to whomsoever had will thereto, and therefore was she deemed to be the greatest and noblest of women. Biorn, son of Bolverk Blinding-snout, had had Geirrid to wife, and their son was called Thorolf, and was a mighty viking; he came out some time after his mother, and was with her the first winter. Thorolf deemed the lands of Burgdale but too narrow, and he challenged Ulfar the Champion for his lands, and bade him to the holm-gang because he was an old man and a childless. But Ulfar had liefer die than be cowed by Thorolf. They went to holm in Swanfirth, and Ulfar fell, but Thorolf was wounded in the leg, and went halt ever after, and therefore was he called Halt-foot. Now he set up house in Hvamm in Thorsriverdale. He took to himself the land after Ulfar, and was the most wrongful of men. He sold land to the freedmen of Thorbrand of Swanfirth; Ulfar's-fell to Ulfar, to wit, and Orligstead to Orlig; and they dwelt there long after. Thorolf Halt-foot had three children; his son was called Arnkel, but his daughter Gunnfrid, whom Thorbein of Thorbeinstead up on Waterneck east from Drapalith had to wife; their sons were Sigmund and Thorgils, but their daughter was hight Thorgerd, whom Vigfus of Drapalith had to wife. Another daughter of Thorolf was Geirrid, whom Thorolf the son of Heriolf Holkinrazi had to wife. They dwelt at Mewlithe; their children were Thorarin the Swart and Gudny.

Chapter 9. Of Thorstein Codbiter. Battle At Thorsness Thing.

Thorolf Most-Beard died at Templestead, and then Thorstein Codbiter took his inheritance after him. He then took to wife Thora, daughter of Olaf Feilan and sister of Thord the Yeller, who dwelt at Hvamm in those days.

Thorolf was buried at Howness, west of Templestead.

At that time so great was the pride of the kin of Kiallak, that they thought themselves before all other men in that countryside; and so many were the kinsmen of Biorn that there was no kindred so mighty in all Broadfirth.

In those days Barne-Kiallak, their kinsman, dwelt in Midfell-strand, at the stead which is now called Kiallakstead, and a many sons he had who were of good conditions; they all brought help to their kin south of the firth at Things and folk-motes.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

On a spring-tide at Thorsness Thing these brothers-in-law Thorgrim Kiallakson and Asgeir of Ere gave out that they would not give a lift to the pride of the Thorsness-folk, and that they would go their errands in the grass as elsewhere men do in man-motes, though those men were so proud that they made their lands holier than other lands of Broadfirth. They gave forth that they would not tread shoe for the going to the out-skerries for their easements.

But when Thorstein Codbiter was ware of this, he had no will that they should defile that field which Thorolf his father had honoured over all other places in his lands.

So he called his friends to him, and bade them keep those folk from the field by battle if they were minded to defile it.

In this rede were with him Thorgeir the son of Geirrod of Ere, and the Swanfirthers Thorfin and Thorbrand his son, Thorolf Halt-foot, and many other thingmen and friends of Thorstein.

But in the evening when the Kiallekings were full of meat they took their weapons and went out on to the ness; but when Thorstein and his folk saw that they turned off from the road that lay skerry-ward, they sprang to their weapons and ran after them with whooping and egging on. And when the Kiallekings saw that, they ran together and defended themselves.

But those of Thorsness made so hard an onset that Kiallak and his men shrunk off the field and clown to the foreshore, and then they turned against them therewith, and there was a hard battle between them; the Kiallekings were the fewer, but they had a chosen band. But now the men of Woodstrand were ware of this, Thorgest the Old and Aslak of Longdale; they ran thereto and went betwixt them; but both sides were of the fiercest, nor could they sunder them before they gave out that they would aid those who should hearken to their bidding to sunder.

Therewith were they parted, but yet in such wise that the Kiallekings might not go up on to the field; so they took ship, and fared away from the Thing.

There fell men of either side, the most of the Kiallekings; and a many were hurt. No truce could be struck, because neither side would handsel it, but swore to fall on each other as soon as it might be brought about. The field was all bloody whereas they fought, as well as there whereas the men of Thorsness had stood while the fight was toward.

Chapter 10. Peace Made.

After the Thing the chiefs on either side sat at home with many men about them, and much ill blood there was between them. Their friends took this rede, to send word to Thord the Yeller, who was then the greatest chief in Broadfirth: he was akin to the Kiallekings, but closely allied to Thorstein; (1) therefore he seemed to be the likeliest of men to settle peace between them. But when this message came to Thord, he fared thither with many men, and strove to make peace. He found that far apart were the minds of them; yet he brought about truce between them, and a meeting to be summoned. The close of the matter was that Thord should make it up, on such terms that whereas the Kiallekings laid down that they would never go their errands to Dirtserry, Thorstein claimed that they should not defile the field now more than aforetime. The Kiallekings claimed that all they who had fallen on Thorstein's part should be fallen unhallowed, because they had first set on them with the mind to fight. But the Thorsnessings said that all the Kiallekings had fallen unhallowed because of their law-breaking at a Holy Thing.

But though the terms laid down were hard for the award, yet Thord yeasaid the taking it on him rather than that they should part unappeased. Now Thord thus set forth the beginning of the award: "Let hap abide as hap

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

befell"; said that for no manslayings nor hurts which had happed at Thorsness should man-gild be paid. The field he gave out unhallowed because of the blood shed in wrath that had fallen thereon, and that land he declared now no holier than another, laying down that the cause thereof were those who first bestirred them to wounding others. And that he called the only peace-breaking that had betid, and said withal that no Thing should be held there thenceforward. But that they might be well appeased and friends thenceforth, he made this further award, that Thorgrim Kiallakson should uphold the temple half at his own costs, and answer for half the temple toll, (2) and the Thingmen the other half. He should also help Thorstein thenceforth in all law-cases, and strengthen him in whatso hallowing he might bestow on the Thing, wherso it should next be set up.

Withal Thord the Yeller gave to Thorgrim Kiallakson Thorhild his kinswoman, the daughter of Thorkel Main-acre his neighbour; and thenceforth was he called Thorgrim the Priest. Then they moved the Thing up the ness, where it now is; and whenas Thord the Yeller settled the Quarter Things, he caused this to be the Quarter Thing of the Westfirthers, and men should seek to that Thing from all over the Westfirths. There is yet to be seen the Doom-ring, where men were doomed to the sacrifice. In that ring stands the stone of Thor over which those men were broken who were sacrificed, and the colour of the blood on that stone is yet to be seen.

And at that Thing was one of the holiest of steads, but there men were not forbidden to go their errands.

ENDNOTES:

(1) "Thord the Yeller... he was akin to the Kiallekings, but closely allied to Thorstein (Codbiter)." How he was otherwise related to the Kiallekings than by affinity we do not see. His wife, Alfdis of Barra, was the daughter of Konal, who was second cousin to Thorgrim the Priest, son of Kiallak the Old (as we learn from "Landnama" ii, 11, 19, cf "Gretti's Saga", ch.3):

```
Olvir Bairncarle  his sister  Ondott
|
Steinmod          |  Astrid, m. to Kiallak the
|                  |  Old
Konal              |  Thorgrim the Priest
|
Alfdis, m. to Thord the Yeller
```

But Thord the Yeller was Thorstein Codbiter's brother-in-law. See the genealogy of the Thorsnessings.

(2) "Thorgrim Kiallakson should uphold the temple half at his own costs, and answer for half the temple toll, and the Thingmen the other half." The original reads: "Thorgrimr Kjallaksson skyldi halda upp hofinu at helmingi ok hafa halfan hof toll, ok sva thingmenn at helmingi." The passage is somewhat obscure and the translation scarcely quite to the point, the words "answer for" being better altered to "have" simply. The temple was, of course, that Thor's temple of which Thorstein Codbiter was the hereditary "gothi", priest. But now Thorgrim Kiallakson is evidently made a joint "gothi" or temple priest of it with Thorstein. This cannot mean anything but that, in order to appease his rivalry with Thorstein, Thord the Yeller raised him to the dignity of a chief with half a share in the sacerdotal duties and privileges at Thorsness. For this purpose he was to "have" half the temple toll, cf. Chapter XXXVI: "To that temple must all men pay toll," etc. This only seems to mean, that one half of the temple toll which formerly had been paid to Thorstein by his Thingmen, should henceforth be paid to Thorgrim by the men of the gothorth or chiefship, which Thord the Yeller now created in his favour.

Chapter 11. Of Thorgrim The Priest, The Death Of Thorstein Codbiter.

Thorstein Codbiter became a man of the greatest largesse; he had ever with him sixty freedmen; he was a great gatherer of household stuff, and was ever going a-fishing.

He first let raise the homestead at Holyfell, and brought thither his household, and it was the greatest of temple-steads of those days.

Withal he let make a homestead on the ness near to where had been the Thing. That homestead he let make well arrayed, and he gave it afterwards to Thorstein the Swart, (1) his kinsman, who dwelt there thenceforth, and was the wisest of men. Thorstein Codbiter had a son who was called Bork the Thick. But on a summer when Thorstein was five-and-twenty winters old, Thora bore him a man-child who was called Grim, and sprinkled with water. That lad Thorstein gave to Thor, and said that he should be a Temple-Priest, and called him Thorgrim.

That same harvest Thorstein fared out to Hoskuldsey to fish; but on an evening of harvest a shepherd-man of Thorstein's fared after his sheep north of Holyfell; there he saw how the fell was opened on the north side, and in the fell he saw mighty fires, and heard huge clamour therein, and the clank of drinking-horns; and when he hearkened if perchance he might hear any words clear of others, he heard that there was welcomed Thorstein Codbiter and his crew, and he was bidden to sit in the high-seat over against his father.

That foretoken the shepherd told in the evening to Thora, Thorstein's wife; she spake little thereon, and said that might be a foreboding of greater tidings.

The morning after came men west-away from Hoskuldsey and told these tidings: that Thorstein Codbiter had been drowned in the fishing; and men thought that great scathe. Thora went on keeping house there afterwards, and thereto joined himself with her he who is called Hallward; they had a son together, who was called Mar.

Chapter 12. Of Arnkel The Priest And Others.

The sons of Thorstein Codbiter grew up at home with their mother, and they were the hopefullest of men; but Thorgrim was the foremost of them in all things, and was a chief as soon as he had age thereto. Thorgrim wedded west in Dyrafirth, and had to wife Thordis Sur's daughter, and betook himself west to his brothers-in-law Gisli and Thorkel.

Now Thorgrim slew Vestein Vesteinson (2) at the harvest feast in Hawkdale; but the autumn next after, when Thorgrim was five-and-twenty years old, even as his father, Gisli his brother-in-law slew him at the harvest feast at Seastead. Some nights after Thordis his wife brought forth a son, and the lad was called Thorgrim after his father. A little thereafter Thordis was wedded to Bork the Thick, Thorgrim's brother, and betook her to housekeeping with him at Holyfell. Then fared Thorgrim her son to Swanfirth, and was there at fostering with Thorbrand; he was somewhat reckless in his youth, and was called Snerrir, but afterwards Snorri. Thorbrand of Swanfirth had to wife Thurid, daughter of Thorfin Selthorison from Redmell.

These were their children: Thorleif Kimbi was the eldest, the second was Snorri, the third Thorod, the fourth Thorfin, the fifth Thormod; their daughter was called Thorgerd; all these were foster-brethren of Snorri Thorgrimson.

At that time Arnkel, son of Thorolf Haltfoot, dwelt at Lairstead by Vadils-head; he was the biggest and strongest of men, a great lawman and mighty wise, and was a good and true man, and before all others, even

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

in those parts, in luck of friends and hardihood; he was withal a Temple-Priest, and had many Thingmen.

Thorgrim Kiallakson dwelt at Bearhaven as is aforesaid, and he and Thorhild had three sons: Brand was the eldest; he dwelt at Crossness by Sealriver head. (3) Another was Arngrim; he was a big man and a strong, large of nose, big-boned of face, bleak-red of hair, early bald in front; sallow of hue, his eyes great and fair; he was very masterful, and exceeding in wrongfulness, and therefore was he called Stir.

Vermund was the name of the youngest son of Thorgrim Kiallakson; he was a tall man and a slender, fair to look on; he was called Vermund the Slender. The son of Asgeir of Ere was called Thorlak; he had to wife Thurid, the daughter of Audum Stote of Lavafirth. These were their children: Steinthor, Bergthor, Thormod, Thord Wall-eye, and Helga. Steinthor was the foremost of the children of Thorlak; he was a big man and a strong, and most skilled in arms of all men, and he was the best knit of men, and meek of mood in every-day life. Steinthor is held for the third best man-at-arms of Iceland, along with these, Helgi, the son of Droplaug, and Vemund Kogr.

Thormod was a wise man and a peaceful. Thord Wall-eye was a very masterful man. Bergthor was the youngest, yet had he all the makings of a man in him.

Chapter 13. Of Snorri Thorgrimson.

Snorri Thorgrimson was fourteen winters old when he fared abroad with his foster-brothers Thorleif Kimbi and Thorod. Bork the Thick gave him fifty hundreds in silver for his voyage. They had a good voyage, and came to Norway in harvest, and were the winter through in Rogaland.

Snorri abode (4) with Erling Skialgson at Soli, and Erling was good to him because of the ancient friendship between their former kinsmen, Horda-Karl and Thorolf Most-beard to wit.

The summer after they fared out to Iceland and were late-ready. They had a hard outing of it, and came a little before winter to Hornfirth; but when the Broadfirthers dight them from shipboard, far asunder showed the array of the twain, Snorri and Thorleif Kimbi. Thorleif bought the best horse he could get, and had withal a fair-stained saddle, and glittering and fair-dight sword, and gold-inlaid spear, and his shield was dark blue and much gilded about; and all his clothes were well wrought withal. He had spent thereon pretty much all his faring-money; but Snorri was clad in a black cape, and rode a black mare, a good one. He had an ancient trough-saddle, and his weapons were little wrought for show. But the array of Thorod was between the two.

They rode from the east over the Side, and then as the road lay, west to Burgfirth, and so west across the Flats, and gusted at Swanfirth. Thereafter Snorri rode to Holyfell, and was minded to abide there the winter through. Bork, however, took that matter slowly, and folk had much laughter over his array. Bork let out so much as that he had done unhappily with the faring-money, since it was all gone.

But one day in the beginning of winter, at Holyfell in came twelve men all armed. And there was come Eyolf the Gray, a kinsman of Bork (5) and son of Thord the Yeller; he dwelt at Otterdale west in Ernfirth. But when folk asked for tidings, they said that they had slain Gisli Surson, and told of the men who were fallen before him or ever he fell. At these tidings was Bork exceeding glad, and bade Thordis and Snorri welcome Eyolf at their best, as a man who had thrust off so much shame from the hands of them and their kin.

Snorri let out little over those tidings, but Thordis said: "Cheer good enough for Gisli's bane if grout is given him."

Bork answered: "I meddle not with meals."

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

So Bork set Eyolf in the high-seat, and his fellows out from him, and they cast their weapons on the floor. Bork sat inside of Eyolf, and then Snorri Thordis bare in dishes of grout to the board, and had spoons withal; but when she set one before Eyolf, one of the spoons fell down for her. She stooped after it, and took Eyolf's sword therewith and drew it swiftly, and thrust it up under the board, and the thrust smote Eyolf's thigh, but the hilt caught against the board; yet was the hurt sore. Bork thrust the table away and smote at Thordis, but Snorri thrust Bork away, so that he fell over, and caught hold of his mother and set her down beside him, and said that enough were her heart-burnings though she were left unbeaten.

Then sprang up Eyolf and his men, and man caught hold of man; but such was the end of these matters that Bork handselled self-doom to Eyolf, and much fee he awarded himself for his hurt; and withal he fared away. But thereof waxed much ill-will betwixt the twain, Bork and Snorri.

Chapter 14. Snorri Gets Holyfell.

At the Spring Thing the next summer Snorri claimed his father's heritage from Bork. Bork answered that he would yield him his heritage. "But I am loth," said he, "to share Holyfell asunder, though I see that it is meet for us not to dwell in one stead together. So I will redeem my share of the land." Snorri answered: "It is most fair that thou shouldst lay the land at as dear a price as thou wilt, but fair also that I choose which of us shall redeem it."

Bork thought over that matter, and so deemed that Snorri would not have loose money to give for the land if he should have to redeem it speedily, and he laid the worth of half the land at sixty hundreds of silver, having first set aside the islands, because he thought that he should get them at but little price when Snorri should have set up house and home elsewhere.

There followed therewith that the money should be straightway paid up, and nought of the money should be borrowed from other folk. (6) "And choose thou now, Snorri, here on the spot which thou wilt take," said Bork.

Snorri answered: "This know I now, kinsman Bork, that thou deemest me sick of purse when thou layest down the land of Holyfell so good cheap; yet I choose to take to me my father's land at that price, so reach me out thine hand, and handsel me now the land."

"That shall not be," said Bork, "before every penny is first yolden."

Then said Snorri to Thorbrand his foster-father: "Did I hand over to thee any money last autumn?" "Yea," said Thorbrand, and therewith drew a purse from under his cape. Then was the silver told, and every penny paid for the land, and after that was left in the purse sixty hundreds of silver.

Bork took the money, and gave handsel to Snorri of the land.

Then said Bork: "More of silver hast thou got, kinsman, than we wotted; now I will that we give up the ill-will which was between us; and I will add this to thy well-doing, that we keep house both together at Holyfell these seasons, since thou hast little of live-stock."

Snorri answered: "Well then, thou shalt make the most of thy live-stock; but yet from Holyfell shalt thou get thee gone." And so must it be even as Snorri would.

But when Bork was ready to depart from Holyfell, Thordis went forth and named witnesses to this for herself, that she gave out that she was parted from Bork her husband, and gave that for the cause that he had smitten her, and she would not lie under his hand. Then were their goods divided, and Snorri stood forth for his

mother because he was her heir. Then Bork took the lot which he had minded for another, that he got but a little price for the islands.

Thereafter Bork fared away from Holyfell, and west to Midfell–strand, and dwelt first at Borkstead between Orris–knoll and Tongue.

Chapter 15. Of Snorri The Priest, Of The Mewlithe–Folk.

Snorri Thorgrimsom set up house at Holyfell, and his mother was over the housekeeping. Mar Hallwardson, his father's brother, betook himself thither with much live–stock, and was head over Snorri's household and husbandry. There Snorri held a thronged house of the greatest largesse.

Snorri was middling in height and somewhat slender, fair to look on, straight–faced and of light hue; of yellow hair and red beard; he was meek of mood in his daily ways; little men knew of his thought for good or ill; he was a wise man, and foreseeing in many things, enduring in wrath and deep in hatred; of good rede was he for his friends, but his unfriends deemed his counsels but cold.

He was now Warden of the Temple there; therefore was he called Snorri the Priest, and a great chief he became; but for his rule he was much envied, because there were many who for the sake of their kin thought they were of no less worth than he, but had more to fall back upon, because of their strength and proven hardihood.

Now Bork the Thick and Thordis Sur's daughter, had a daughter who was called Thurid, and was at this time wedded to Thorbiorn the Thick, who dwelt at Frodis–water. He was the son of Worm the Slender, who had dwelt there and had settled the land of Frodis–water; he had before had to wife Thurid of Broadwick, daughter of Asbrand of Combe; she was sister to Biorn, the Champion of the Broadwickers, who hereafter cometh again into this tale, and to Arnbiorn the Strong. These were the sons of Thorbiorn and Thurid: Ketil the Champion, Gunnlaug, and Hallstein.

But Thorbiorn of Frodis–water was overbearing and reckless with men lesser than he.

In those days dwelt at Mewlithe, Geirrid, daughter of Thorolf Halt–foot, with Thorarin the Swart, her son. He was a big man and a strong; ugly he was, and moody and quiet in his daily guise: he was called the Peace–maker. He had not much wealth to boast of, yet was his housekeeping gainful. So little of a meddler was he, that his foes said that he had no less the heart of a woman than a man. He was a married man, and his wife was called Aud; Gudny was his sister, whom Vermund the Slender had to wife.

At Holt, west of Mewlithe, dwelt a widow who was called Katla. She was fair to look upon, but yet not to all men's minds. Her son was called Odd; he was a big man and of good pith, a mighty brawler, and babbling, slippery, and slanderous.

Now Gunnlaug, the son of Thorbiorn the Thick, was eager to learn; he often stayed at Mewlithe, and learned cunning from Geirrid, Thorolt's daughter, because she knew much wizard lore. But on a day Gunnlaug came to Holt on his way to Mewlithe, and talked much with Katla; but she asked if he were minded once more for Mewlithe to pat the old carline's belly there. Gunnlaug said that was not his errand, "but thou art not so young, Katla, that it befits thee to cast Geirrid's eld in her teeth."

Katla answered: "I did not deem that we were so like herein; but it matters not," said she; "ye men deem that there is no woman beside Geirrid, but more women know somewhat than she alone."

Chapter 16. Gunnlaug Is Witch-Ridden, Geirrid Summoned, Of Thorarin.

On a day at the beginning of that winter wherein Snorri first kept house at Holyfell, it befell that Gunnlaug Thorbiornson fared to Mewlithe, and Odd Katlason with him. Gunnlaug and Geirrid talked long together that day, and when the evening was far spent Geirrid said to Gunnlaug: "I would that thou go not home this evening, for there will be many ride-by-nights (1) about, and oft is a fiend in a fair skin; but methinks that now thou seemest not over-lucky to look upon."

Gunnlaug answered: "No risk may there be to me," says he, "since we are two together."

She said: "No gain will Odd's help be to thee, and withal thou wilt thyself have to pay for thine own wilfulness."

Thereafter they went out, Gunnlaug and Odd, and fared till they came to Holt. Katla was by then in her bed; she bade Odd pray Gunnlaug to abide there. He said he had so done, "and he must needs fare home," said he. "Let him fare then as his fate he shapes," says she.

Gunnlaug came not home in the evening, and folk talked it over that he should be searched for; but the search came not off. But in the night, when Thorbiorn looked out, he found Gunnlaug his son before the door; and there he lay witless withal. Then was he borne in and his clothes pulled off; he was all black and blue about the shoulders, and the flesh was falling from the bones. He lay all the winter sick of his hurts, and great talk there was over that sickness of his. Odd Katlason spread that about that Geirrid must have ridden him; for he said that they had parted with short words that evening. And most men deemed that it was even thus.

This was about the summoning days. So Thorbiorn rode to Mewlithe and summoned Geirrid for this cause, that she was a ride-by-night and had brought about Gunnlaug's trouble. The case went to the Thorsness Thing, and Snorri the Priest took up the case for Thorbiorn his brother-in-law; but Arnkel the Priest defended the case for Geirrid his sister: a jury of twelve should give a verdict thereon. (2) But neither of the two, Snorri or Arnkel, were deemed fit to bear witness, (3) because of their kinship to the plaintiff and defendant.

Then was Helgi, the Priest of Templegarth, the father of Biorn, the father of Gest, the father of Shald-Ref, called to give out the twelve men's finding. Arnkel the Priest went to the doom and made oath on the stall-ring that Geirrid had not wrought the hurt of Gunnlaug; Thorarin made oath with him and ten other men, and then Helgi gave the verdict for Geirrid. And the case of Thorbiorn and Snorri came to nought, and thereof gat they shame.

Chapter 17. Strife At The Thorsness Thing; Snorri Goes Between.

At this Thing Thorgrim Kiallakson and his sons strove with Illugi the Black about the jointure and dowry of Ingibiorg, Asbiorn's daughter, the wife of Illugi, which Tiforni had had in wardship.

At the Thing great storms befell, so that no man could come to the Thing from Midfell-strand, and a great drawback to Thorgrim's strength it was that his kin might not come.

Illugi had a hundred men and those a chosen band, and he pushed the case forward; but the Kiallekings went to the court, and would fain break it up.

Then there was a mighty throng, and men made it their business there to part them; but so the matter went, that Tiforni had to give up the money according to Illugi's claim. So says Odd the Skald in Illugi's lay:

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

"It was west at the Thorsness Thing fray was there foughten,
And there was the man by hap ever upholden;
The staff of the song from the helm that upriseth
Was a-claiming the dowry amidst of the Mote.
So the fair load of Fornir's scrip fell in the ending
To the keen-witted wight one, the warrior that feedeth
The swart swallow's brother that flits o'er the fight.
But no easy matter was peace unto menfolk."

Thereafter the storm abated, and the Kiallekings came west from the Strand. Then would Thorgrim Kiallakson not hold to the peace, but fell on Illugi, and battle befell there. Then Snorri the Priest bade to him men to go between them, and thus brought them to a truce. There fell three men of the Kiallekings, and four of Illugi's folk. Stir Thorgrimson slew there two men; so says Odd in Illugi's lay:

"Barefaced the folk brake it, the peace well awarded;
There were three fellows fallen amidst of the field
Of those that be urging the opener of war-shield;
(Before the great fir of the ice-ridge they fell;)
Ere unto them Snorri, the Chief that upreareth
The kin of the storm-queans, from out of the cumber,
Could bring aback peace to the band of the menfolk.
Far-famed was that mastership over the men."

Illugi thanked Snorri the Priest for his help, and offered him pay for his aid, but he said he would have no reward for his first help. Then Illugi bade him to his house; and that Snorri took, and had many good gifts, and then Snorri and Illugi were friends for a while.

Chapter 18. Men Will Ransack At Mewlithe: Thorarin Falls To Fight.

That summer died Thorgrim Kiallakson, whereon Vermund the Slender, his son, took the homestead at Bearhaven; he was a wise man, and marvellous wholesome of redes. Stir also had by then dwelt for some time at Lava, up from Bearhaven; he was a wise man and a hardy. He had to wife Thorbiorg, daughter of Thorstein Windy-Nose. Thorstein and Hall were their sons; Asdis was the name of their daughter, a manly-souled woman, and somewhat high-minded. Stir was a masterful man in the countryside, and had a many folk about him; he was held guilty at many men's hands, for that he wrought many slayings and booted none.

That summer came out a ship to the Salteremouth: half of it was owned by Northmen, and their skipper was called Biorn; he went to dwell at Ere with Steinthor. The other half was owned by South-islanders, and Alfgeir was their skipper; he went to dwell at Mewlithe with Thorarin the Swart, and with him a fellow of his who was called Nail, a big man, and swift of foot; he was Scotch of kin.

Now Thorarin had a good fighting horse up in the fells; and Thorbiorn the Thick withal had many stud horses together, which he kept on the fell-pastures, and he was wont to choose out of them in autumn horses for slaughter. But in the autumn it befell that Thorbiorn's horses were not to be found, though they were searched for far and wide: and that autumn the weather was somewhat hard.

In the beginning of winter Thorbiorn sent Odd Katlason south over the heath to a stead called Under-the-Lava, where there dwelt a man called Cunning-Gils, a foreseeing man, and a great man for spying after thefts and such like other matters as he was wistful to pry into. Odd asked whether it was outland men or out-parish men or neighbours who had stolen Thorbiorn's horses.

Cunning-Gils, answered: "Say thou to Thorbiorn even as I say, that I deem that those horses will not have gone far away from their pastures; but risky it is to tell of men's names, and it is better to lose one's own than

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

that great troubles should arise therefrom."

Now when Odd came to Frodis-water, Thorbiorn deemed that Cunning-Gils had made a thrust at the Mewlithers in that matter. Odd said too that he had said as much as that they were the likeliest for the horse-stealing who were themselves penniless, and yet had lately got them increase of servants more than was their wont. In these words Thorbiorn thought that the Mewlithers were clearly meant.

After that rode Thorbiorn from home with eleven men. Hallstein, his son, was in that journey, but Ketil the Champion, another son of his, was then abroad; there was Thorir, the son of Ern of Ernknoll, a neighbour of Thorbiorn's and the briskest of men; Odd Katlason, too, was in this journey; but when they came to Holt to Katla, she did on Odd her son an earth-brown kirtle, which she had then newly made.

Thereafter they fared to Mewlithe, and there stood Thorarin and the home men out in the door when they saw the men coming.

Then they greeted Thorbiorn and asked for tidings. Thorbiorn said: "This is our errand here, Thorarin," says he, "that we are seeking after the horses which were stolen from me in the autumn; therefore we claim to ransack thine house."

Thorarin answered: "Is this ransacking taken up according to law; or have ye called any lawful law-seers (4) to search into this case; or will ye handsel truce to us in this ransacking; or have ye sought further elsewhere for the doing of this ransacking?"

Thorbiorn answered: "We deem not that any ransacking need be pushed further."

Thorarin answered: "Then will we flatly refuse this ransacking, if ye begin and carry on the search lawlessly."

Said Thorbiorn: "Then shall we take that for sooth, that thou wilt be found proven guilty, if thou wilt not have the matter thrust off thee by the ransacking."

"Ye may do as ye please," said Thorarin.

Thereafter Thorbiorn made a door-doom, (5) and named six men for that doom; and then Thorbiorn gave forth the case at Thorarin's hands for the horse-stealing.

Then came Geirrid out to the door, and saw what betid, and said: "Overtrue is that which men say, Thorarin, that thou hast more of the mind of a woman than a man, when thou bearest from Thorbiorn the Thick all shame soever; nor wot I why I have such a son."

Then said Alfgeir the Skipper, "We will give thee aid in whatsoever thou wilt bestir thyself."

Thorarin answered: "No longer will I stand here;" and therewith Thorarin and his folk ran out and would break up the court. They were seven in all, and therewithal both sides rushed into the fight. Thorarin slew a house-carle of Thorbiorn's, and Alfgeir another, and there fell also a housecarle of Thorarin's; but no weapons would bite on Odd Katlason. ,

Now the goodwife Aud calls out on her women to part them, and they cast clothes over the weapons.

Thereafter Thorarin and his men went in, but Thorbiorn rode off with his folk, and they put off the case to the Thorsness Thing. They rode up along the Creeks, and bound up their wounds under a stackyard that is called Combe-Garth.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

But in the home-field at Mewlithe men found a hand whereas they had fought, and it was shown to Thorarin; he saw that it was a woman's hand, and asked where Aud was; it was told him that she lay in bed. Then he went to her, and asked whether she were wounded; she bade him pay no heed to that, but he was ware withal that her hand had been hewn off. Then he called to his mother, and bade her bind up the wound.

Then Thorarin rushed out with his fellows and ran after those of Thorbiorn, and when they were but a little from the garth they heard the babble of Thorbiorn and his folk; and Hallstein took up the word and said:

"Thorarin has thrust off from him the reproach of cowardice to-day."

"Boldly he fought," said Thorbiorn; "yet many become brave when brought to bay, but nathless are not over-brave between whiles."

Then said Odd: "Thorarin must needs be the bravest of men, but luckless will it be deemed that he so wrought as to cut off his wife's hand."

"Is that sure?" said Thorbiorn.

"Sure as day," says Odd. With that they jumped up, and made great shouting and laughter thereover.

In that very nick of time came up Thorarin and his folk, and Nail was the foremost; but when he saw them threaten with their weapons, he blenched and ran forth and up into the fell, and there became one witless with fear. (6) But Thorarin rushed at Thorbiorn and smote his sword into his head, and clave it down to the jaw-teeth. Then Thorir Ernsen with two others set on Thorarin, and Hallstein and another on Alfgeir. Odd Katlason with another man gat on to a fellow of Alfgeir's, and three of Thorbiorn's fellows on two of Thorarin's folk; and the fight was joined both fierce and fell. But so their dealings ended, that Thorarin cut the leg from Thorir at the thickest of the calf, and slew both his fellows. Hallstein fell before Alfgeir wounded to death; but when Thorarin was free, Odd Katlason fled with two men; he was not wounded, because no weapon might bite on his kirtle; all their other fellows lay on the field; and there too were slain two housecarles of Thorarin.

Then Thorarin and his men took the horses of Thorbiorn and his folk and rode home; and then they saw where Nail was running along the upper hill-side. And when they came to the home-field, they see that Nail had passed by the garth and made inward towards Buland's-head. There he found two thralls of Thorarin, who were driving their sheep from the Head; he told them of the meeting, and what odds in number of men there was; he said he knew for sure that Thorarin and his men were slain; and therewithal they see how men ride away from the homestead over the field.

Then Thorarin and his folk took to galloping in order to help Nail, that he might not run into the sea or over the cliffs; but he and those others, when they saw men riding eagerly, deemed that there must Thorbiorn be going. Then they all betook themselves to running afresh up on to the Head, till they came to that place which is now called Thrall-scrée, and there Thorarin and his folk got Nail taken, because he had well-nigh broken his wind, but the thralls leapt over from the Head and were lost, as was like to be, because the Head is so high, that whatsoever leaps thereover must perish.

Thereafter Thorarin and his men rode home, and there was Geirrid in the door, and she asked how they had fared; but Thorarin sang this stave:

"The word of a woman wherewith I was wited
Have I warded away now where war dared the warrior,
He who slayeth the fire-flaught flaming in fight:

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

(The share of the eagle was corpse-meat new slaughtered.)
No yielding forsooth did I bear about yonder,
Where, amidst of the corpse-worms I met him,
The praiser manly the prayer of War-god beworshipped,
Not often I boast me of deeds of my doing."

Geirrid answered: "Do ye tell of the slaying of Thorbiorn?" Thorarin sang:

"The sharp-shearing sword found a place for abiding
Neath the hat of the God's son, the deft of the song.
There was reeking the corpse-flood around, and arising
About him, the seeker of onrush of anger.
Blood fell over the ears of the singer a-fighting,
When the bane of the battle-tent drew near at hand,
And the doom-hall of dooms whence the spoken word falleth
With the red blood moreover was full in the fight."

"So then the whetting of you has gone home," said Geirrid, "but now go ye within and bind up your wounds;" and so they did.

Now must it be said of Odd Katlason that he fared away till he came to Frodis-water, and told the tidings there. Thurid the goodwife let gather men to fetch the bodies and bring the wounded home. Thorbiorn was laid in cairn, but Hallstein his son was healed, and so was Thorir of Ernknoll, and he went thereafter on a wooden leg, therefore was he called Wooden-leg ever after. He had to wife Thorgrima the Witch-face; their sons were Ern and Val, manly men.

Chapter 19. The Lay Of The Mewlithers.

For one night was Thorarin at home at Mewlithe, but in the morning Aud asked him what shift he was minded to seek for himself. "No will have I to turn thee out of my house," said she; "but I fear that there will be many a door-doom holden here this winter, for well I wot that Snorri the Priest must needs take up the case for Thorbiorn his brother-in-law." Then sang Thorarin:

"The wakener of law-wrong shall nowise meseemeth
This winter that waneth lay blood-wite on me,
For yonder is Arnkel, and there, as my hope is,
My life-warden liveth all praise-worth to win.
Might I come but to Vermund and fare with the feeder
Of the flame of the God of the field where the corpses
Lie fallen in slaughter, then surely for me
Might Hugin's son feed fat on field of the slain."

Then said Geirrid, "That is now the best rede, to seek to such men allied as Vermund is, or Arnkel my brother."

Thorarin answered: "Need enough there will be of the help of both before the end of the case; but we must first lay our trust in Vermund."

So that same day rode all those who had been at the slaying east along the firths, and came to Bearhaven in the evening, and went in just when men were gotten to their seats. Vermund greets them, and straightway gives up the high-seat to Thorarin, and when they had sat them down, then Vermund asked for tidings. Then Thorarin sang:

"To the stems of the sword-storm full clear shall my tale be:
But let each hold his peace in meanwhile of the telling,

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

For surely methinketh the Gods of the iron
May look for the arrow-play soon to be seen.
Ye shall wot of the war-stems the wielders of shield,
In what wise of law they dealt with me duly;
How the arm of the Lady, the hand's reed down-hanging
In that tide I beheld with the blood reddened over."

"What is to be said, brother-in-law?" said Vermund. Thorarin sang:

"It was e'en at my house that they held me in battle,
Those Gods of the glaive that my life were waylaying;
The light of the roar of the battle was biting
The watcher that warded the way of the spear.
So then to the dwarf-folk of Odin so did we
That scant was the dealing of ruth that we dealt them:
And little indeed then the lust lay upon me
To let lull the sword-play wherein we were playing."

Gudny, his sister, took her stand on the floor and said: "Hast thou put from thee somewhat that coward's word of those folk from the west?" Thorarin sang:

"I had to ward off me the wife of the Goddess
Who under the battle-cloud slaughtered men chooseth;
The blood drifted over the oar of the wounding,
And great gain had the raven of corpses new-gotten,
When the chisel of wounding white-shining, clean-whetted,
Went whirring in war-play all over the helm
That hangs on the head of the son of my father,
And the brooks of the blood-wave ran over the holm."

Then said Vermund: "Methinks thou hast had some hasty dealings with them." Sang Thorarin:

"Spaemaids of the man-mote where heavily roareth
The thunder of war-choosers over the mead,
The sharp-biting maidens, the peril of war-helms,
That season were singing aloud round my shield.
When the hollow-wrought sun-disc that Frodis' arm holdeth
With blood was bedrifted before the ring's lord,
When the river of Gioll all uprisen was waxing
With the flood-tide of weapons wide over the fields."

Vermund said: "Did they know at last whether thou weft man or woman?" Thorarin answered:

"Yea, methought at the last all that word of the witing
I drave off indeed when I fell unto dealing
With the son of the war-god that wieldeth in war
The bitter-sharp scathe of the board of the battle,
Since alow lies the deft one, well learned in the driving
Of Rakni's dear horses; and now whatsoever
The lucky of life to his playmate may tell,
The ravens are tearing their meat from sword-wielders."

Thereafter Thorarin told the tidings. Then asked Vermund: "Why then didst thou go after them? Didst thou not think enough had been done that first time?" Thorarin sang:

"O shearer of shards from the wildfire of Odin,
Many hard words of hatred I look to be hearing,
It was e'en in such wise that at Enni I showed them

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

That I wotted full well how to make the wolf merry,
But the stems of the blood that is blessed for the Gods,
E'en they who entangle the thrums of the law-court,
Gave out that my hand hewed the goddess of weaving;
Those confounders of justice to fighting they egged me."

"Thou art excused though thou didst not abide that," said Vermund; "but whatwise did those outlanders turn out?" Thorarin sang:

"Yea verily Nail got all corpse-goslings victual
In a fashion most pitiful, passing belief;
For the wont to the weight of the labour that weareth,
The craven, betook him full fast to the fell.
But Alfgeir becoifed with the war-helm was keener,
And into the weapon-song brisker he wended.
There flared out the flame of the fight for a season,
As it rushed in its fury o'er battle-fain men."

"What, did not Nail bear himself right well?" said Vermund. Thorarin answered:

"He that heedeth the path of the spear in the battle
Ran away from the fight, and he wept as he wended;
Unto him as he ran there, that warder of war-mask,
Nowise good was the hope of his getting him peace.
And so it betided that he, the grief-scenting,
The mare-driver, e'en for a sea-leap was minded;
He that round about goeth the beer-stoups to offer,
His heart held to nought but the blenching from battle."

Now when Thorarin had been one night at Bearhaven, Vermund said to him: "Thou wilt not deem me very manly in my aid towards thee, brother-in-law; but I mistrust me in taking you all into my house, unless more men should come into this trouble; and now will we ride to-day to Lairstead, and see Arnkel thy kinsman, that we may know wherein he will aid us, for it is my deeming that Snorri the Priest will show a heavy hand in the blood-suit."

"Thou shalt rule all," said Thorarin, and when they were off and on their way he sang:

"O Vermund, O wealth-tree, yet will we remember
How oft and oft over erewhile we were merry,
In the days ere my heart drave me on to encompass
The death of the warrior that wafted the gold.
O goddess of linen, to this am I looking
In fear lest I be but a laughing-stock only
To the thane, the keen-hearted; loth am I to catch
Fresh rain of the shields reddened over with battle."

Herein he pointed at Snorri the Priest.

Now these, Vermund and Thorarin, rode unto Lairstead, and Arnkel greeted them well, and asked for tidings. Quoth Thorarin:

"Ah, fearsome to think of the storm that fell on us,
And the rain of the ravens: wine round my abode;
Flared the flame that provideth the mouthful of Munin
As it rushed in its wrath o'er the men of the foe;
When the light-gleaming lime of the moon of the vikings,
Whereas in the battle-mote men were a-meeting,

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Bit the limbs of the tribesmen that lift up the sword,
And right through the peace-shrine of Hogni it pierced them."

Arnkel asked after the haps of the tidings that Thorarin told of, and when he had set forth all as it was, Arnkel said: "Wroth hast thou been, kinsman, as meek as thou art wont to be."

Said Thorarin:

"They that gather the gain of the snowdrift abiding
Where high up on the ness the hawk sitteth eager,
Have called me peace-fain of the folk of aforetime;
The hinderer the hopler of hatred was I.
But oft, as the saw saith, from out of calm weather
The rain cometh rushing all over the earth.
So let the fair land of the light that wrist beareth,
Who longeth for long life this word of mine hearken."

"That may well be," said Arnkel; "but this I would say to thee, kinsman, that thou shalt abide with me till these matters are ended somehow; but though I take on myself the lead in this bidding, I say this to thee, Vermund, do not thou fall off from the matter, though I do take in Thorarin."

"It is meet," said Vermund, "that I should help Thorarin all I may, none the less though thou be the foremost to deal him aid."

Then said Arnkel: "It is my rede that we sit all of us together hard by Snorri the Priest through the winter."

So did they, and Arnkel had a throng of men about him that winter; but Vermund was at Bearhaven or with Arnkel turn and turn about. Thorarin kept ever the same mood, and was mostly silent; but Arnkel was a stately housekeeper and exceeding blithesome, and he deemed it ill if others were not ever joyous as was he, and often he spoke to Thorarin that he should be merry and fearless. "I have been told that the widow at Frodis-water staves off her sorrow well, and laughable will it seem to her if thou bearest thine ill." Thorarin sang:

"The fair-tripping widow shall nowise bewite me
Of fear-fulfilled mood, as she sitteth ale-merry
Though soothly I wot that the raven was glutted,
And his maw stuffed with meat of the corpses of men.
And now is hard hatred midst manfolk befallen,
And the hawk of the corpses in time that is coming
Groweth glad of his gettings, and gladdened shall be
By the hard play of sword-dew that hangeth about us."

Then said a home-man of Arnkel's: "Thou knowest not before the Thorsness Thing is done in the spring whether thou may'st be enough for thyself in these cases." Thorarin sang:

"The war-shields' upholders give out for the hearkening
That for me shall be dealt out the lot from the dooming
Of war-beset wandering wide over the land,
(So now reach we for rede from the hands of the mighty,
Unless Arnkel, who winneth the praise of the people,
For a man of all menfolk my blood-feud upholdeth;
And therefore it is that full truly I trust me
In that warder of wizardry sung o'er the war-mask."

Chapter 20. The End Of Katla And Odd.

Now Geirrid, the goodwife at Mewlithe, sent word to Lairstead that she was ware of this, that Odd Katlason had stricken off the hand from Aud; she said that she had Aud's own word therefor, and that Odd had made boast of it before his friends.

But when Arnkel and Thorarin heard this, they rode from home out to Mewlithe, twelve men all told, and were there through the night; but in the morning they rode out to Holt, from whence their going was seen.

Now at Holt was no man at home but Odd. Katla sat on the dais, and span yarn. She bade Odd sit beside her; "and be thou as near to me as thou may'st." She bade her women sit in their seats, "and be ye silent," quoth she, "and I will have words with them."

So when Arnkel and his folk came, they went in there, and when they came into the chamber, Katla greeted Arnkel and asked for tidings. Arnkel said he had nought to tell, and asked where was Odd. Katla said he had gone south to Broadwick. "Nor would he have foregone meeting thee if he had been at home, for that we trust thee well for thy manliness."

"That may be," said Arnkel, "but we will have a ransacking here."

"That shall be as ye will," said Katla, and bade her cookmaid bear light before them and unlock the meat bower, "that is the only locked chamber in the stead."

Now they saw, how Katla span yarn from her rock, and they searched through the house and found not Odd; and thereafter they fared away.

But when they were come a short space from the garth, Arnkel stood still and said:

"Whether now has Katla cast a hood over our heads, and was Odd her son there whereas we saw but a rock?"

"She is not unlike to have so done," said Thorarin, "so let us fare back." And that they did.

But when it was seen from Holt that they turned back, then said Katla to her women:

"Ye shall still sit in your seats, but I will go with Odd out into the fore-chamber." So when they were come out through the chamber door, she went into the porch over against the outer door, and combed Odd her son, and sheared his hair.

Then Arnkel and his folk fall in at the door, and saw where Katla was, and played with a he-goat of hers, and stroked his head and beard, and combed out his fell. Arnkel and his men went into the stove and saw Odd nowhere, but there lay Katla's rock on the bench, and thereby they deemed that Odd could never have been there.

Thereafter they went out and fared away. But when they came nigh to where they had turned before, Arnkel said: "Is it not in your mind that Odd was there in the likeness of that he-goat?"

"I wot not," said Thorarin, "but if we turn back now, then shall we lay hands on Katla."

"We will try once more then," said Arnkel, "and see what will happen;" and therewith they turned again.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

But when their faring was seen, Katla asked Odd to come with her; and when they came out, she went to the ash-heap, and bade Odd lie down thereunder, "and abide thou there, whatsoever may come to pass."

Now when those of Arnkel came to the house, they ran in, and so into the chamber, and there sat Katla on the dais and span. She greeted them, and said that their visits came thick and fast. Arnkel said it was so; and therewith his fellows took the rock and hewed it asunder.

Then said Katla: "Ye will not have to say at home this eve that ye had no errand at Holt, since ye have slaughtered my rock."

Then went Arnkel and his folk and sought for Odd within and without, and saw nought quick save a house-boar that Katla owned, which lay under the ash-heap; and thereafter they fared away.

But when they were come halfway to Mewlithe, came Geirrid to meet them, with a workman of hers, and asked, how they had fared. Thorarin told her all about it. She said they had ill sought for Odd: "But I will that ye turn back again once more, and I will fare with you; nought will it avail to sail with leaf-sails whereas Katla is."

With that they turned back. Geirrid had a blue mantle over her; and when their coming was seen from Holt, Katla was told that now they were fourteen folk altogether, and one of them in coloured raiment.

Then said Katla: "Must not Geirrid the troll be coming there? Then may glamour only nowise be brought to bear."

With that she got up from the dais, and took the seat from under her, and there was a lid under that, and the dais was hollow within; therein she made Odd to go, and set everything right as it was before, and sat thereover; but she said withal that she felt somewhat uncouth.

But when those folk came into the chamber, it came to no greetings between them. Geirrid cast off her cloak and went up to Katla, and took a sealskin bag which she had had with her, and did it over Katla's head; and then her fellows bound it fast beneath. Then bade Geirrid break open the dais, and there was Odd found, and bound sithence; and after that those twain were brought up to Buland's-head.

There was Odd hanged, and as he spurned the gallows Arnkel said: "Ill is thy lot from thy mother; and so it is that thou hast verily had an ill mother."

Katla said: "True it may be that he has had no good mother, but the ill lot that he has had from me has not been by my will; but it is my will that all ye may have ill hap from me, and I hope withal that that may come to pass; nor shall it be hidden from you that I wrought that harm to Gunnlaug Thorbiornson wherefrom all these troubles have arisen.

"But thou, Arnkel," said she, "may'st have no ill hap from thy mother, because thou hast none alive; but herein were I fain that my spell may stand fast, that from thy father thou mightest have a lot as much the worse than Odd has had from me, as thou hast the more to risk than he; and I hope that this may be said before all is over, that thou hast an ill father."

Thereafter they stoned her with stones that she died under the Head there; and fared afterwards to Mewlithe, and were there through the night; but the next day they rode home. Now were all these tidings known at one time, and of that tale no folk thought harm: and so the winter wore.

ENDNOTES:

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

(1) "Ride-by-night" (kveld-ritha), a possessed female wight, who after the fashion of troll-women riding wolves with snakes for reins in the dusk and dark of night, boding evil (cf. Lay of Helgi Hiorvardson, 35, and the prose piece after v. 30), were supposed to flit about at night in order to inflict grievous bodily harm on man and beast.

(2) "A jury of twelve should give the verdict thereon." The jury (kvithar), in this case, was the so-called "tylftar-" or "to1ftar-kvithr", which was called in in cases where evidence, not of palpable facts, but of probability, was to be given. In this case the kind of twelve-men's jury delivering the verdict was the so-called "gotha-kvithr", priest's jury, which was empannelled by the gothi himself out of his Thingmen without any reference to neighbourhood. — Gragas, i, a, 66-67.

(3) "Bear witness"; read: give out the verdict; cf. 1. 30, "give out the twelve men's finding," which is the same function that kinship was considered to prevent Snorri and Arnkel from undertaking.

(4) "Law-seers" (logsjandr) seem here to be in a case in which they are not met with in Gragas, according to which they were called in either to decide whether a proffered medium of payment was good in law, or as eye-witnesses of a committed manslaughter. But here their business was expected to be, to decide whether Thorbiorn the Thick had a case that justified him in law to proceed to such a serious infringement of a free house-holder's right, as a domiciliary search for stolen goods involved. In fact, they are here looked upon as legal advisers, or counsel on behalf of the plaintiff.

(5) "Door-doom" (dura-domr) was a special institution of Norwegian law; it is not mentioned in the Gragas, nor in the sagas of Iceland proper, except here and in "Landnama" ii 9, where this very case is referred to. In the Older Gulathing's-law (Norges gamle Love, i., sect. 37), the occasion of this kind of court is stated, and its procedure minutely detailed at great length. It was called into operation for the recovery of disputed debts, to the contraction of which there had been no witnesses. It must be holden in front of the debtor's doors, "not at the back of his house," i.e. not at the "back-door", so far away from it, that the debtor should have space enough for the holding of a counter-court of his own, with room enough left between this court and the door for a waggon loaded with wood to pass easily. How a court of this description could be extended to the case here in question we are not informed. Perhaps the explanation is to be found in the statement (Chapter XV), that "Thorbiorn was over-bearing and reckless with men lesser than he."

(6) "And there became one witless with fear" — varth thar at gjalti. The description of the blind fear of the thralls here, as well as that in the case of Ufeig, Arnkel's slave (Chapter XXXVII), have for their basis the old popular tales which centred round the phrase, "at vertha at gjalti", to become utterly mad with sudden fright. The word "gjalti" itself, which only occurs in this phrase, and consequently is only known in the dative governed by the prep. "at", the "i" being the dat. termination, is an Irish loan-word, meaning "mad, wild". That the old Scandinavians looked both upon the word and what it betokened as distinctly Irish is made clear by the Speculum Regale (Konungs skuggsjá). In that work chapters x. and xi. are devoted to the description of Ireland. As one of the marvels of that country the author 'brings in the kind of men there who are called "gelt", and immediately turns off to explain what is meant by the phrase, "at vertha at gelti" (var. gialti). Thereof, he says, _"this is the cause, that where two armies meet, and the two ranks on either side raise an exceeding wild war-whoop, it may often happen to soft youths, who have not served in an army before, that they lose their wits from that awe and terror which then seizes them, so that they run away into woods from other folk, where they feed like beasts, and shun the meeting with man even as wild things do," etc. — Konungs skuggsjá (p. 27). Comparing this statement with the description of the terror that seized the young prince, Suibhne, the son of Colman Cuar, at the battle of Magh Rath, we are left no longer in doubt as to whence the tradition about those who "vertha at gjalti" originally came. "Fits of giddiness", says the Irish record, "came over him at the sight of the horrors, grimness, and rapidity of the Gaels; at the looks, brilliance, and irksomeness of the foreigners; _at the rebounding furious shouts and bellowings of the various embattled tribes on both sides, rushing against and coming into collision with one another." _ The relation between the

two statements amounts almost to a literal translation on the part of the Norwegian author, as the italicized passages (*) in both statements show. Both the Norwegian record, and particularly that of Suibhne, are too long, highly interesting though they are, to be inserted here. It is enough to state that Suibhne acquired the historical sobriquet of "Geilt" = maniac, in the songs of his own country, a fragment of one of which is preserved in a MS. of St. Paul's monastery, near Unterdrauberg, in Carinthia, sign. sec. xxv d., fol. 8²; see Windisch, *Altirische texte*, p. 318. An Irish romance detailing the Buile Suibhne, madness of Suibhne, is still in existence; see O'Donovan's edition of "The Battle of Magh Rath", p. 236, footnote 9. For the whole description of Suibhne's madness, which, though overlaid with adjectives *_ad nauseam_*, is perhaps the most acutely conceived analysis of physical terror that exists in any language, we must refer the reader to O'Donovan's above-quoted edition of "The Battle of Magh Rath", pp. 231-37.

Chapter 21. They Take Rede About The Blood-Feud.

The next spring on a day Arnkel called to him for a talk Thorarin his kinsman, Vermund, and Alfgeir, and asked them what kind of help they deemed the friendliest for them: whether they would ride to the Thing; "and that we expend therein all our other friends," said he, "and then one of two things may hap: either that peace will be brought about, and then will your purses be shaken in atoning all who were slain there, or were hurt before you. That too may hap for one thing if the riding to the Thing is risked, that the troubles may wax, if so be the case is defended over-fiercely. But the other choice is to turn all our thoughts to this, that ye may fare abroad with all your loose goods, and let the lands be dealt with as fate may have it, such of them as may not be sold."

Of this kind of help was Alfgeir most fain. Thorarin also said that he saw not how he might have means to atone with money all those guilts which had been wrought in these matters. Vermund said that he would not part from Thorarin whether he would that he should fare abroad with him, or give him fighting-help here in the land. But Thorarin chose that Arnkel should help them to going abroad; so thereafter was a man sent out to Ere, to Biorn the Skipper, to turn all his mind to get the ship ready for them as soon as might be.

Chapter 22. Snorri Summons Thorarin.

Now it must be told of Snorri the Priest that he took up the blood-feud for the slaying of Thorbiorn his brother-in-law; he also made Thurid his sister fare home to Holyfell, because the rumour ran that Biorn, the son of Asbrand from Combe, was wont to wend thither to meet her for her beguiling.

Now Snorri deemed that he saw through all the counsel of Arnkel and his friends, as soon as he learned of that ship getting ready for sea, namely, that they had no mind to deliver money atonements for those slayings; because that as yet no biddings of peace were coming forward from their hands; yet was all quiet up to the summoning days. But when that time came round Snorri gathered men, and rode up into Swanfirth with eighty men, because it was then the law to give out the summons for blood-guilt in the hearing of the slayers, or at their home, and not to summon the neighbours till the Thing.

But when Snorri's faring was seen from Lairstead; then men talked together whether they should set on him forthwith, because there were many men there together; but Arnkel said that that should not be; "Snorri's law shall we bear," said he, and he said that only that should be wrought as things stood which need drove them to.

So when Snorri came to Lairstead, no greetings there were betwixt them, and then Snorri summoned Thorarin and all those who had been at the slayings, to the Thorsness Thing.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Arnkel hearkened duly to the summoning, and thereafter Snorri and his band rode away and up into Ulfar's-fell, and when they were gone away, then Thorarin sang:

"O ground whereon groweth the fair flame of hands,
Nought is it as if men were even now robbing
The flinger abroad of the flame of the sword-storm,
Of the law of the lands-folk, for me made all guilty.
Though they, deft in dealing with roof-sun of Odin,
Should lay me down guilty, and out of the law.
Forsooth I can see it that more is their manflock;
But yet may God give us the gain o'er the foemen."

Snorri the Priest rode up over the neck to the Copses, and so on to Drapalith, and in the morning out to Swinewater, and thence to Lavafirth, and further as the road lay to Trollsneck, nor stayed his journey till he came to Saltere-mouth. But when they came there, some kept guard over the Eastmen, and some burnt the ship, and then when all was done, Snorri and his folk rode home.

Now Arnkel heard that Snorri had burned the ship, and then those twain, Vermund and Thorarin, took boat with certain men, and rowed west across the firth to Daymeal-ness, where lay a ship that was owned by Eastmen. Arnkel and Vermund bought that ship; and half thereof Arnkel gave to Thorarin, but Vermund got ready his share. They brought the ship out into Dimon, and there made ready. Arnkel abode there with them till they were ready for sea, and then went out with them past Ellidis-isle, and there parted in friendship.

Then Thorarin and Vermund sailed over the main, but Arnkel went home to his house; and so spread the rumour that this help was deemed of the manliest.

Snorri the Priest fared to the Thorsness Thing and pushed forward his suit, and Thorarin was made guilty, and all those men who had been at the slayings; but after the Thing he took to himself as much of the guilt-fines as he could. And thus those matters ended.

Chapter 23. Of Vigfus And Biorn And Mar.

Vigfus, the son of Biorn, the son of Ottar, dwelt at Drapalith, as is aforesaid; he had to wife Thorgerd, Thorbein's daughter; he was a mighty bonder, but exceeding violent. A sister's son of his dwelt with him who was called Biorn; he was a rash-spoken man and unyielding.

Now in the autumn, after the closing of the Mewlithe suits, were found the horses of Thorbiorn the Thick in the mountain, and the stallion had not been able to hold his pasture-ground before a stallion of Thorarin's, who had driven the other horses, which were all found dead.

That same autumn folk held a thronged sheep-folding at Tongue up from Holyfell, betwixt it and Lax-river; thither went to the folding the home-men of Snorri the Priest, and Mar Hallwardson, the father's brother of Snorri, was at the head of them. Helgi was the name of Snorri's shepherd. Biorn, the kinsman of Vigfus, lay on the fold-garth; he had a pike-staff in his hand. Now Helgi drew out sheep. Biorn on a time asked what sheep was that which he drew; and when that was looked to, there was the mark of Vigfus on the sheep.

Then said Biorn: "Thou art in a hurry to slip out the sheep to-day, Helgi."

"That is more like to befall thee," said Helgi, "who abide in the sheep-walks of men."

"Well, thief, what knowest thou of that?" said Biorn, and sprang up and drove at him with the staff so that he fell stunned. But when Mar saw that, he drew his sword and cut at Biorn, and the stroke fell on the arm up by

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

the shoulder, and a great wound that was. Thereat men ran into two bands, but some went betwixt them, and they were parted, so that nought else happed to tell of. But the next morning rode Vigfus down to Holyfell and claimed boot for this shaming, but Snorri spoke, saying that he saw no odds between those haps that had befallen.

That Vigfus liked ill enough, and they parted with the greatest ill-will.

In the spring Vigfus brought a suit for the wounding to the Thorsness Thing, but Snorri set forth, that Biorn should be made guilty for the blow with the staff; and the end of the case was that Biorn was made guilty, because of the onslaught on Helgi, and got no boot for his wound, and his arm he bare ever after in a sling.

Chapter 24. Of Eric the Red.

At this same Thing Thorgest the Old and the sons of Thord the Yeller brought a case against Eric the Red for the slaughter of the sons of Thorgest, who had been slain in the autumn when Eric fetched the settles to Broadlairstead; and very thronged was that Thing; but before it they had sat at home with crowded followings. While the Thing was toward, Eric fitted out a ship for the main in Eric's-creek in Oxisle, and in aid of Eric stood Thorbiorn Vifil's son, and Slaying-Stir, and the sons of Thorbrand of Swanfirth, and Eyolf, son of Aesa of Swineisle. But out of those that furthered Eric, Stir alone was at the Thing, and drew away from Thorgest all the men he might.

Stir prayed Snorri the Priest not to set on Eric after the Thing with those of Thorgest, and gave his word to Snorri in return, that he would help him another time, should he be holden by great troubles; and because of this promise Snorri let the case pass by. After the Thing those of Thorgest sailed with many ships into the islands; but Eyolf, son of Aesa, hid Eric's ships in Dimon's bay, and thither came Stir and Thorbiorn to meet Eric; and then did Eyolf and Stir after the fashion of Arnkel, for they went in company with Eric, each in his own skiff, as far as past Ellidis-isle.

In the voyage Eric the Red found Greenland, and was there three winters, and then he went to Iceland, and abode there one winter before he fared out to settle Greenland; but this befell fourteen winters before Christ's faith was made law in Iceland.

Chapter 25. Of Vermund And Thorarin In Norway; Of Those Bareserks.

Now is it to be said of Vermund and Thorarin the Swart that they came up from the main as far north as Thronnheim-mouth, and stretched in for Thronnheim. In those days Earl Hakon, son of Sigurd, ruled over Norway; so Vermund went to the Earl, and became his man, but Thorarin went thence straightway that same autumn West-over-the-sea with Alfgeir, and Vermund gave them his share in the ship; and henceforward Thorarin has nought to do with this tale.

Earl Hakon abode at Hladir that winter, and Vermund was with him holden in great friendship, and the Earl did well to him, because he wotted that Vermund was of great kin out in Iceland.

With the Earl were two brothers, Swedes of kin, one called Halli, the other Leikner; they were big men of stature and strength, nor at that time were their peers herein to be found in Norway, nor far and wide elsewhere. They wrought Bareserkgang, and were not of the fashion of men when they were wroth, but went mad like dogs, and feared neither fire nor steel; but their daily wont was to be not ill to deal with, if nought was done to cross them; but they were straightway the most overreckless of men if anyone should beard them. Eric the Victorious, King of Sweden, had sent these Bareserks to the Earl, and gave him this warning therewith, that he should treat them well, and said, as was true, that of them might be the greatest avail if folk

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

gave heed to their moods.

Now in the spring, when Vermund had been one winter with the Earl, he yearned for Iceland, and prayed the Earl for leave to fare thither. The Earl bade him go since he would, and bade him thus: "Think if there be anything in my power more than another which thou wilt take for thy furtherance, such as may be worthy and honourable for both of us."

But when Vermund had thought thereover, what thing he should ask of the Earl, it came into his mind that his ways would be greatly furthered in Iceland if he had such followers as those Bareserks were; and settled in his mind that he would pray the Earl to give him the Bareserks for his following; and this urged him to ask for them, that he deemed that his brother Stir lay heavy on his fortune, and dealt unjustly with him as with most others when he could bring his strength to bear on him. So he thought that Stir would deem it less easy to deal with him if he had such fellows as those two brothers were.

Now says Vermund to the Earl that he will take that honour from his hands, if he will give him for his safeguard and fellowship those Bareserks.

The Earl answered: "Now hast thou asked me for that which seems to me will in nowise be to thy gain, though I grant it thee. I deem that they will be to thee hard and high-minded as soon as thou hast aught to deal with them. I deem it beyond the power of most bonders: sons to curb them or hold them in fear, though they have been yielding enough in their service to me."

Vermund said that he would take them with that risk if the Earl would give him them into his power. The Earl bade him first ask the Bareserks if they would follow him. He did so, and asked if they would fare with him to Iceland, and give him fellowship and service; but he promised in return that he would do well to them in such matters as they deemed of need to them, and of which they knew how to tell him.

The Bareserks said that they had not set their minds on going to Iceland, and they wotted not if there were such chiefs there as would be meet for them to serve; "but if thou art so eager, Vermund, that we should fare to Iceland with thee, thou must look for it that we shall take it ill if thou givest not that which we ask for, if thou hast wherewithal." Vermund said that should never be, and thereafter he gat their yea to go to Iceland with him, if that were with the Earl's will and consent.

Now Vermund tells the Earl how things had gone, and the Earl settled that the Bareserks should fare with him to Iceland, "if thou deemest that most to thine honour;" but he bade him bethink him that he should deem that a cause for enmity if he ended ill with them, so utterly as they were now in his power; but Vermund said there was no need that things should come thereto.

Thereafter Vermund fared to Iceland with the Bareserks, and had a good voyage, and came home to his house in Bearhaven the same summer that Eric the Red went to Greenland, as is written afore.

Soon after Vermund came home, Halli the Bareserk fell to talk with Vermund about getting him a seemly match, but Vermund said he saw no hope that any woman of good kin would bind herself or her fortune to a Bareserk; so he hung back in that matter. But when Halli knew that, he burst out into wolfish mood and ill-will, and all went athwart betwixt them, and the Bareserks made themselves right big and rough with Vermund, so that he began to rue it that he had gotten him those Bareserks on hand.

Now in the autumn had Vermund a great feast, and bade Arnkel the Priest to him, and the men of Ere, and Stir his brother; and when the feast was over he offered to give the Bareserks to Arnkel, and calls that a thing of the fittest; but he will not take them.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Then Vermund asked Arnkel for counsel as to how he should rid himself of this trouble; but he put in a word that he had better give them to Stir, and said it rather befitted him to have such men because of his overweening and iniquitous ways.

So when Stir was ready to go away, Vermund went to him and said: "Now will I, brother, that we lay aside the coldness which was between us before I fared abroad, and take to faithful kinship and loving-kindness; and therewith will I give thee those men that I have brought out, for thy strength and fellowship, nor do I know any men will dare to trust themselves to strife with thee if thou hast such followers as they are."

Stir answered: "I have good will, brother, to better our kinship; but that only have I heard about those men whom thou hast brought out hither, that by taking them, one shall rather get trouble than furtherance or good luck from them; nor will I that they ever come into my house, for full enough are my enmities though I get me no trouble from these."

"What counsel givest thou then, kinsman," said Vermund, "that I may put off this trouble from me."

"That is another case," said Stir, "to loose thee from thy troubles, than taking these men of thine hand as a friendly gift, and thus I will not take them; but it is the due of no man more than me to put off this thy trouble from thee, if we both have one way of thinking about it."

But though Stir spake so, Vermund chose that he should take to him the Bareserks, and the brothers parted in good love. Stir went home and the Bareserks with him, though they were not willing to this at first, and bade Vermund know that he had no right to sell or give them like unfree men; yet they said withal that it was more to their mood to follow Stir rather than Vermund; and things went very hopefully between them and Stir at first. The Bareserks were with Stir when he went west over Broadfirth to slay Thorbiorn Jaw who dwelt at Jawfirth. A lock-bed he had made exceeding strong with beams of timber, but the Bareserks brake that up, so that the naves outside sprang asunder; yet was Stir himself the bane of Thorbiorn Jaw.

Chapter 26. Of Vigfus And Swart The Strong. The Slaying Of Vigfus.

The autumn when the Bareserks came to Stir, this happed withal, that Vigfus of Drapalith went to burn charcoal to the place called Selbrents, and three thralls with him, one of whom was Swart the Strong; but when they came into the wood Vigfus said: "Great pity it is, and so thou wilt deem it thyself, Swart, that thou shouldst be an unfree man, strong as thou art, and manly to look upon."

"Truly I deem it a great trouble," said Swart; "but it is not so with my will."

Vigfus said: "What wilt thou do that I give thee thy freedom?"

"I may not buy it with money, for I have it not," said he; "but such things as I may do I will not spare."

Said Vigfus: "Thou shalt go to Holyfell and kill Snorri the Priest, and thereafter shalt thou verily have thy freedom, and therewith will I give thee good fortune."

"Nay, I may not bring that about," said Swart.

"I shall give thee counsel," said Vigfus, "so that this may be brought about without any risk of thy life."

"Well, I will listen to it," said Swart.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

"Thou shalt go to Holyfell and get into the loft that is over the outer door, and pull up the boards of the floor, so that thou may'st thrust a bill therethrough; then when Snorri goes out to his privy, thou shalt thrust the bill through the floor of the loft into his back so hard that it may come out at his belly; and then leap off out on to the roof and so over the wall, and let the mirk night cover thee."

So with this counsel went Swart to Holyfell, and broke open the roof over the outer door, and went into the loft thereby; and that was at such time as Snorri and his folk sat by the meal-fires. But in those days were the places of easement outside the houses. But when Snorri and his folk went from the fires they were minded for the place of easement, and Snorri went first, and got off out into the outer door before Swart could bring his onset about; but Mar Hallwardson came next, and Swart thrust the bill at him, and it smote the shoulder-blade, and glanced off out towards the armpit, and there cut itself through, and no great wound it was. Then Swart sprang out and over the wall, but the causeway stones were slippery under him, and he fell a great fall when he came down, and Snorri got hold of him before he got up.

Then they had a true tale of him, and he told them all that had been twixt him and Vigfus, and withal that he was burning charcoal under Selbrents.

Then was Mar's wound bound up, and thereafter Snorri set out with six men to Drapalith. And when they came up the hill-side they saw the fire whereat Vigfus and his folk burned charcoal. Withal they came unawares upon Vigfus and his men, and slew him, but gave life to the house-carles, and thereafter Snorri went back home; but the house-carles of Vigfus told these tidings at Drapalith.

Vigfus was laid in cairn the next day, and that same day went Thorgerd his wife into Lairstead to tell the tidings to Arnkel her kinsman, and bade him take up the blood-suit for the slaying of Vigfus. But he put that off from him, and said that that belonged to the Kiallekings, the kin of Vigfus; and above all would he have the case go to Stir, and said that it was fittest to him to take up the cause for Vigfus his kinsman; "for," said he, "he is a man who is fain to meddle in many things."

Now Thormod Trefilson sang this song about the slaying of Vigfus:

First the Folk-wielder
Felled there the feller
Of fight-boar gold-bristled,
Vigfus men hight him.
The wound-mews thereafter
There were they tearing
Full meat of fight-god,
Biorn's heirship wearer.

Chapter 27. Arnkel Takes Up The Blood-Feud For Vigfus.

Thereafter went Thorgerd out under Lava, and bade Stir take up the suit for Vigfus his kinsman. He answered: "But I promised Snorri the Priest last spring, when he sat those suits of ours with the Thorgestlings, that I would not go against him with enmity in cases for the taking up of which there were many as nigh of kin as I. Now wert thou best to seek to Vermund my brother for this matter, or other kinsmen of ours."

So then Thorgerd fared out to Bearhaven, and prayed Vermund for aid, and said that the case came most home to him, "because Vigfus was wont to trust in thee the best of all his kin."

Vermund answered: "Now am I bound to lay down some good counsel for thee; yet am I loth to go into these matters instead of other kinsmen of ours, but I shall give thee help both with furtherance and counsel such as

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

I may get done; but first I will that thou fare west to Ere and find Steinthor, Vigfus's kinsman; he is now at ease to fight, and it is now high time for him to try himself in some kind of case."

Thorgerd answered: "Much ye make me do for this suit, but I will not spare my labour if it be to its furtherance."

Thereafter she went west to Ere and found Steinthor, and bade him be leader of the case.

Steinthor answered: "Why dost thou bid me this? I am but a young man, and have had nought to do with the cases of men. But there are kinsmen of Vigfus nearer to him than I am, who are more forward than I withal; neither is it to be anywise hoped that I should take this case from their hands; but I shall not part myself from those of my kin who may have this blood-suit to look to."

No other answer got Thorgerd than this. So she made for home thereafter and then east again along the firths to find Vermund, and told him what things had come to, and said that the whole matter would be thrown over unless he became leader thereof.

Vermund answered: "It is not unlikely that some stir will be made concerning these matters for thy comforting. However, I shall now once more lay down a rede for thee if thou wilt but do thine utmost."

She answered: "Most things would I undergo therefor."

"Now shalt thou go home, and let dig up Vigfus thy husband, and take his head and bring it to Arnkel, and say to him thus, that that head would not have weighed with others the taking up of the blood-suit after him, if need there had been thereof."

Thorgerd said she wotted not where these things were coming to in the end, but she saw well enough that they spared her neither labour nor heartburn. "Yet even this will I undergo," said she, "if thereby the lot of my foes be made heavier than before."

Thereafter she fared home, and went in about this business as she was taught in all wise; and when she came to Lairstead she told Arnkel that the kin of Vigfus would that he should be the leader in taking up the blood-suit for the slaying of Vigfus, and that they all promised their help.

Arnkel said that he had said before whereto his mind was given about the suit.

Therewithal Thorgerd drew from under her cloak the head of Vigfus, and spake: "Here is now a head," said she, "that would not have begged off from taking up the suit for thee, if there had been need thereof."

Arnkel started back thereat, and thrust her from him, and said: "Go," says he, "and say so much to the kin of Vigfus, that henceforward they waver not more in their help against Snorri the Priest, than I shall in the leading of the suit; but so my mind tells me that, however the case goes, they shall lay land under foot or ever I do. But I see that these thy doings are by Vermund's counsel; but no need will he have to egg me on wheresoever we brothers-in-law are in one place."

Then went Thorgerd home. The winter wore, and in the spring Arnkel set afoot the case for the slaying of Vigfus against all those who had been at the slaying, except Snorri the Priest; but Snorri set forth a cross-suit for the unhallowing of Vigfus for plotting against his life and for the wounding of Mar; and men came thronging on both sides to the Thorsness Thing.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

All the Kiallekings gave help to Arnkel, and theirs was the biggest company; and Arnkel pushed on the case with great eagerness.

But when the cases came into court, men went thereto, and the cases were laid to award by the urging and peace-making of men of good will; and so it befell that Snorri the Priest made a handsel as to the slaughter of Vigfus, and great fines were awarded; but Mar should be abroad for three winters. So Snorri paid up the money, and the Thing came to an end in such wise, that peace was made in all the suits.

Chapter 28. The Wooing of Asdis, Stir's Daughter.

Now that happed to tell of next which is aforewritten, that the Bareserks were with Stir, and when they had been there awhile, Halli fell to talking with Asdis, Stir's daughter. She was a young woman and a stately, proud of attire, and somewhat high-minded; but when Stir knew of their talk together, he bade Halli not to do him that shame and heartburn in beguiling his daughter.

Halli answered: "No shame it is to thee though I talk with thy daughter, nor will I do that to thy dishonour; but I will tell thee straightly that I have so much love in my heart for her, that I know not how to put it out of my mind. And now," said Halli, "will I seek for fast friendship with thee, and pray thee to give me thy daughter Asdis, and thereto in return will I put my friendship and true service, and so much strength through the power of my brother Leikner, that there shall not be in Iceland so much glory from two men's services as we two shall give thee; and our furtherance shall strengthen thy chieftainship more than if thou gavest thy daughter to the mightiest bonder of Broadfirth, and that shall be in return for our not being strong of purse. But if thou wilt not do for me my desire, that shall cut our friendship atwain; and then each must do as he will in his own matter; and little avail will it be to thee then to grumble about my talk with Asdis."

When he had thus spoken, Stir was silent, and thought it somewhat hard to answer, but he said in a while:

"Whether is this spoken with all thine heart, or is it a vain word, and seekest thou a quarrel?"

"So shalt thou answer," said Halli, "as if mine were no foolish word; and all our friendship lies on what thine answer will be in this matter."

Stir answered: "Then will I talk the thing over with my friends, and take counsel with them how I shall answer this."

Said Halli: "The matter shalt thou talk over with whomsoever pleases thee within three nights, but I will not that this answer to me drag on longer than that, because I will not be a dangler over this betrothal."

And therewithal they parted.

The next morning Stir rode east to Holyfell, and when he came there, Snorri bade him abide; but Stir said that he would talk with him, and then ride away.

Snorri asked if he had some troublous matter on hand to talk of. "So it seems to me," said Stir.

Snorri said: "Then we will go up on to the Holy Fell, (1) for those redes have been the last to come to nought that have been taken there."

"Therein thou shalt have thy will," said Stir.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

So they went upon to the mount, and there sat talking all day till evening, nor did any man know what they said together; and then Stir rode home.

But the next morning Stir and Halli went to talk together, and Halli asked Stir how his case stood.

Stir answered: "It is the talk of men that thou seemest somewhat bare of money, so what wilt thou do for this, since thou hast no fee to lay down therefor?"

Halli answered: "I will do what I may, since money fails me."

Says Stir: "I see that it will mislike thee if I give thee not my daughter; so now will I do as men of old, and will let thee do some great deed for this bridal."

"What is it, then?" said Halli.

"Thou shalt break up," says Stir, "a road through the lava out to Bearhaven, and raise a boundary-wall over the lava betwixt our lands, and make a burg (2) here at the head of the lava; and when this work is done, I will give thee Asdis my daughter."

Halli answered: "I am not wont to work, yet will I say yea to this, if thereby I may the easier have the maiden for wife."

Stir said that this then should be their bargain.

Thereafter they began to make the road, and the greatest of man's-work it is; (3) and they raised the wall whereof there are still tokens, and thereafter wrought the burg. But while they were at the work, Stir let build a hot bath at his house at Lava, and it was dug down in the ground, and there was a window over the furnace, so that it might be fed from without, and wondrous hot was that place.

Now when either work was nigh finished, on the last day whereon Halli and his brother were at work on the burg, it befell that thereby passed Asdis,

Stir's daughter, and close to the homestead it was. Now she had done on her best attire, and when Halli and his brother spake to her, she answered nought.

Then sang Halli this stave:

"O fair-foot, O linen-girt goddess that beareth
The flame that is hanging from fair limbs adown!
Whither now hast thou dight thee thy ways to be wending,
O fair wight, O tell me, and lie not in telling?
For all through the winter, O wise-hearted warden
Of the board of the chess-play, not once I beheld thee
From out of the houses fare this-wise afoot,
So goodly of garments, so grand of array."

Then Leikner sang:

"The ground of the gold-sun that gleams in the isle-belt
But seldom hath dight her the headgear so stately.
The fir of the fire of the perch of the falcon
Is laden with load of fine work of the loom.
O ground strewn with jewels, O fair spoken goddess

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Of beakers the bright, now I bid thee be telling
What is it that under thy pride lieth lurking?
What hast thou thereunder of more than we wot?"

Therewith they parted. The Bareserks went home in the evening and were much foredone, as is wont to be the way of those men who are skinchangers, that they become void of might when the Bareserk fury falls from them. Stir went to meet them, and thanked them for their work, and bade them come to the bath and rest thereafter, and so they did.

But when they were come into the bath, Stir let the bath-chamber be closed, and had stones laid on the trap-door which was over the fore-chamber, and spread a raw and slimy neat's-hide down by the top entrance thereof; and then he let feed the furnace from without through that window which was thereover.

Then waxed the bath so hot that the Bareserks might not abide it, and leaped up at the door, and Halli brake open the trap-door and got out, but fell on the hide, and Stir gave him his death-blow; but when Leikner would have sprung out by the opening, Stir thrust him through and he fell back into the bath, and died there. Then Stir let lay out the corpses, and they were carried out into the lava, and were cast into that dale which is in the lava, and is so deep that one can see nought therefrom but the heavens above it, and that is beside that self-same road.

Now over the burial of the Bareserks Stir sang this stave:

"Methought that the raisers of riot of spear-mote
Would nowise and never be meek and mild-hearted,
Or hearken the bidding of them that are hardening
The onrush of Ali's high wind and hard weather.
No'dread have I now of their dealings against me,
Of the masterful bearing of the lads of the battle;
For now I, the slayer of tarrying, truly,
With my brand have marked out a meet place for the
Bareserks."

But when Snorri the Priest knew these things he rode out to under Lava, and the twain Snorri and Stir sat again together all day, and this got abroad of their talk, that Stir had betrothed Asdis his daughter to Snorri the Priest, and the wedding was to be held the next autumn; and it was the talk of men that both of these two might be deemed to have waxed from these haps, and this alliance. For Snorri was the better counselled and the wiser man, but Stir the more adventurous and pushing; but either had strong kinship and great following about the countryside.

Chapter 29. Of The Evil Dealings Of Thorolf Halt-Foot.

Now must it be told of Thorolf Halt-foot that he began to get exceeding old, and became very evil and hard to deal with by reason of his old age, and full of all injustice, and things went uneasily enough betwixt him and Arnkel his son.

Now on a day Thorolf rode in to Ulfar's-fell to find Ulfar the bonder. He was a great furtherer of field-work, and much spoken of for this, that he saved his hay quicker than other men, and was so lucky with sheep withal, that his sheep never died of clemming or from storms.

So when Thorolf met him, he asked him what counsel he gave him as to how he should set about his husbandry, and what his mind told him about the summer, if it would be dry or not.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Ulfar answered: "No better rede can I give thee than what I follow myself. I shall let bear out the scythe to-day, and mow down all I may this week, because I deem it will be rainy; but I guess that after that it will be very dry for the next half month."

So things went as he had said, for it was often seen that he could foretell the weather better than other men.

So Thorolf went home, and he had with him many workmen, and now he let straightway begin the out-meadow mowing; and the weather was even as Ulfar had said.

Now Thorolf and Ulfar had a meadow in common upon the neck, and either of them at first mowed much hay, and then they spread it, and raked it up into big cocks. But one morning early when Thorolf arose, he looked out and saw that the weather was thick, and deemed that the dry tide was failing, and called to his thralls to rise and carry the hay together, and work daylong all they might, "for it seems to me," quoth he, "that the weather is not to be trusted."

The thralls did on their clothes and went to the hay-work. But Thorolf piled up the hay and egged them on to work at their most might that it might speed at its fastest.

That same morning Ulfar looked out early, and when he came in, the workmen asked him of the weather, but he bade them sleep on in peace. "The weather is good," said he, "and it will clear off to-day. Therefore to-day shall ye mow in the home-field, but to-morrow will we save such hay as we have up on the neck."

Now the weather went even as he said; and when the evening was wearing on, Ulfar sent a man up to the neck, to look to the hay that stood there in cocks. But Thorolf Halt-foot carried hay with three draught-oxen the day through, and by the third hour after noontide they had saved all the hay that was his. Then he bade carry Ulfar's hay withal into his garth; and they did as he bade them.

But when Ulfar's messenger saw that, he ran and told his master. Then Ulfar went up on to the neck, and was exceeding wroth, and asked Thorolf why he robbed him. Thorolf said he heeded not what he said, and raved and was ugly to deal with, and they well-nigh came to blows. But Ulfar saw that he had no choice but to go away. So he went straightway to Arnkel, and told him of his scathe, and prayed for his warding, "else," he gave out, "all would be gone by the board."

Arnkel said he would bid his father pay boot for the hay, but said that none the less it sorely misgave him that nought would come of it.

So when father and son met, Arnkel bade his father pay Ulfar boot for the taking of the hay; but Thorolf said the thrall was far too rich already. Arnkel prayed him to do so much for his word as to atone for that hay. Then said Thorolf that he would do nought therefor but worsen Ulfar's lot; and therewith they parted.

Now when Arnkel met Ulfar, he told him of Thorolf's answer; but Ulfar deemed that Arnkel had followed up his case coldly, and said that he might have had his way with his father if he had chosen to do so.

So Arnkel paid Ulfar what he would for the hay; and when father and son next met, Arnkel claimed the price of the hay from his father, but Thorolf gave no better answers, and they parted in great wrath. But the next autumn Arnkel let drive from the fells seven oxen of his father's, and had them all slaughtered for his own household needs. That misliked Thorolf beyond measure, and he claimed their price of Arnkel; but he said that they should be in return for Ulfar's hay. Then Thorolf liked matters a great deal worse than before, and laid the whole thing on Ulfar, and said he should feel him therefor.

Chapter 30. Of Thorod Scat-Catcher And Of Biorn Asbrandson, And Of The Slaying Of The Sons Of Thorir Wooden-Leg.

There was a man called Thorod, who was of the Midfell-strand kindred. He was a trustworthy man and a great seafarer, and had a ship afloat. Thorod had sailed on a trading voyage west to Ireland and Dublin.

At that time Sigurd Lodverson, Earl of the Orkneys, had harried in the South-isles, and all the way west to Man. He had laid a tribute on the dwellers in Man; and when peace was made, the Earl left men to wait for the scat (and the more part thereof was paid up in burned silver), but he himself sailed away north to the Orkneys.

Now when they who had awaited the scat were ready to sail, the wind blew from the south-west, but when they had been at sea a while, it shifted to the south-east and east, and blew a great gale, and drove them north of Ireland. Their ship was broken to pieces on an unpeopled island there; and when they were in this plight there bore down on them Thorod the Icelander, late come from Dublin. The Earl's men hailed the chapmen for help, and Thorod put out a boat and went therein himself; and when they met, the Earl's men prayed him for aid, and promised him money to bring them home to the Orkneys to Earl Sigurd. But Thorod deemed he might not do that, since he was already bound for Iceland. But they prayed him hard, because they deemed that their wealth and their lives lay on their not being taken prisoners in Ireland or the South-isles, where they had harried erst. So the end of it was that he sold them his boat from his big ship, and took therefor a good share of the scat; and thereon they laid their boat for the Orkneys, but Thorod sailed boatless for Iceland.

He came upon the south coast of the land, and stretched west along the shore, and sailed into Broadfirth, and came safe and sound to Daymeal-ness, and in the autumn went to dwell with Snorri the Priest at Holyfell, and ever after was he called Thorod Scat-catcher.

Now this was a little after the slaying of Thorbiorn the Thick. And that winter was Thurid, the sister of Snorri the Priest, whom Thorbiorn the Thick had had to wife, abiding at Holyfell. A little while after his coming back to Iceland Thorod put forth the word and prayed Snorri to give him his sister Thurid; and seeing that he was wealthy of money, and that Snorri knew his conditions well, and that he saw that she needed much some good care, with all this it seemed good to Snorri to give him the woman; and he held their wedding in the winter there at Holyfell. But the spring after Thorod betook himself to keeping house at Frodis-water, and he became a good bonder and a trustworthy.

But so soon as Thurid came to Frodis-water Biorn Asbrandson got coming thither, and it was the talk of all men that there was fooling betwixt him and Thurid, and Thorod began to blame Biorn for his comings, yet that mended matters in no-wise.

At that time dwelt Thorir Wooden-leg at Ernknoll, and his sons Ern and Val were grown up by then, and were the hopefulest of men. Now they laid reproach on Thorod in that he bore with Biorn such shame as he dealt him, and they offered to follow Thorod if he would put an end to Biorn's comings and goings.

On a time Biorn came to Frodis-water and sat talking with Thurid. And Thorod was ever wont to be within doors when Biorn was there; but now they saw him nowhere. Then Thurid said: "Take thou heed to thy faring, Biorn; whereas I deem that Thorod is minded to put an end to thy coming hither; and I guess that they have gone to waylay thee; and he will be minded that ye two shall not meet with an equal band."

Then Biorn sang this song:

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

"O ground of the golden strings, might we but gain it
To make this day's wearing of all days the longest
That ever yet hung twixt earth's woodland and heaven --
Yea, whiles yet I tarried the hours in their waning --
For, O fir of the worm that about the arm windeth,
This night amongst all nights, 'tis I and no other
Must turn me to grief now, and drink out the grave-ales
Of the joys of our life-days, full often a-dying."

Thereafter Biorn took his weapons and went away, and was minded for home, but when he came up beyond Bigmull, five men sprang up before him, and there was Thorod and two of his house-carles and the sons of Thorir Wooden-leg. They set on Biorn, but he defended himself well and manly. The sons of Thorir set on the hardest, and gat him wounded, but he was the bane of them both. Then Thorod with his housecarles fled away, and he was but little wounded, and they not at all.

Biorn went his way till he came home, and went into the chamber; and the goodwife called on a handmaid to serve him. And when she came into the chamber with a light, she saw that he was all covered with blood. Then she went forth and told Asbrand his father that Biorn had come home all bloody.

Then Asbrand went into the chamber and asked Biorn why he was bloody. "Perchance ye have met, thou and Thorod?" Biorn answered and said that so it was. Asbrand asked him in what wise their dealings had turned out. Biorn sang:

"I ween for the wight one, the waster of warflame,
Nought skills it in one way to wage war upon me --
Yea, we brought it about that we bore down in battle,
And slaughtered the warriors the wight sons of Woodleg.
Let him fight not, that stirrer of storm of the battle,
As if stroking the goddess, the guard of the linen;
That soft one, the scat-catching bow-bender, never
Shall drag out of battle the treasure of Draupnir."

Then Asbrand bound his wounds and he grew whole again.

But Thorod sought of Snorri the Priest that he would take up the blood-suit for the slaying of the sons of Thorir, and so he let Snorri set on foot the suit for the Thorsness Thing. But the sons of Thorlak of Ere backed the Broadwickers in this suit. And the end of the matter was such that Asbrand gave handsel for Biorn his son, and paid up money-boot for the slayings; but Biorn was outlawed and banished for three winters, and he went out that same summer.

That same summer withal Thurid of Frodis-water gave birth to a man-child, who was called Kiartan; he grew up at home at Frodis-water, and was early a big lad and a hopeful.

But when Biorn came out over the sea, he went south to Denmark, and then south further to Joinsburg, and in those days was Palnatoki captain of the Jomsburg vikings. Biorn entered into covenant with them, and was called a champion there. He was in Jomsburg when Styrbiorn the Strong won it, (4) and he went to Sweden when they of Jomsburg gave aid to Styrbiorn, and was withal at the battle at Fyrisfield where Styrbiorn fell, and fled thence to the woods with the other Jomsburg vikings. And while Palnatoki was alive was Biorn with him, and was deemed the best of men and the bravest in all deeds that try a man.

ENDNOTES:

(1) "Then we will go up unto the Holy Fell," etc. It is hardly a mere accident that, as Snorri here proposes to Stir to discuss a weighty matter on the top of Holy-Fell, so Thorstein Egilson proposes to Illugi the Black to

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

go to the top of the "borg", volcanic cone, above his homestead of Burg, to talk over the betrothal of Gunnlaug Wormtongue to his daughter, which was very much against his mind (Story of Gunnlaug the Wormtongue, ch. v., in *Three Northern Love-stories*). Both incidents stand clearly in connection with ancestral worship, which, of course, is quite evident in the case of Holy-Fell, into which the Thorsnessings believed they died (ch. iv.). Ancestral mounds were from ancient times raised in the neighbourhood of the ancestral abode, whence the statement, "at sitja a haugi", to be sitting on the how of the forefathers. Thus we read of King Refit (*Volsungasaga*, ch. ii.) that, being troubled in mind for having no heir born unto himself, he sat one day on the ancestral mound praying Odin to allay his trouble — for that must be the drift of the passage, — and the god heard his prayer, and sent him a valkyrja in the shape of a crow, with the remedy required. Again, King Olaf Tryggvason sends Hallfred Troubleskald to Thorleif the Sage, an inconvertible heathen, to slay him or blind him. "Thorleif," says the saga, "was wont, even as was greatly the custom among ancient folk, to sit at long times together out on a certain mound, not far away from the homestead, and so it happened even now, when Hallfred came" (*Olaf Tryggvason Saga*, in *Fornmannasögur*, ii. 59). To this same group of ideas must be referred the desire of certain settlers to be buried at a high place where they could overlook their own settlement, and thereto again links itself the belief in mountain powers, such as Bard Snaefellsas and others.

(2) "Berg"; read sheep-fold.

(3) "Thereafter they began to make the road, and the greatest of man's work it is." This same road is still in preservation, and is thus described by Dr. Kalund: "It is the highway, even to this day, which travellers pass going from Bearhaven eastward into the Holy-Fell parish, and passes through the northern spur of the lava which from the Bareserks is still called the Bareserks'-lava. Here the lava is less rough than further to the south, and the road is partly built across the shore inclines of it. Here and there, where the incline is too steep, the gorges are filled with piled-up blocks, while in other places holes over which the road had to go have been filled up, and along the road there are lying in many places heaps of rejected stones covered over with moss. In this way a road has been built not so very different from other lava paths, only more even and perhaps broader than usually. In the middle of the lava one comes upon a fence made of single stones piled on the top of each other, which forms the boundary wall between the lands of Bearhaven and Bareserks'-lava (Lava, Stir's house), and seems never to have served any other purpose. A little further to the east the cairn of the Bareserks is still shown. Here the road goes across a scoop which it has been necessary to fill up to some extent, the filling-up matter leaning against natural blocks of lava. On either side here are to be seen one of those cauldron-formed dips which are characteristic of the lava. The cauldron on the right (south side), which lies at a little distance from the road, is the largest and deepest, and answers so completely to the description of the saga of the place where the Bareserks were encairned, that one would at once conclude that this must have been their burial-place. However, the cairn is shown on the left-hand (northern) side of the road, where an oblong heap of stones stretches down the incline of this lesser cauldron to which the words of the saga do not apply quite so well. It is asserted that in the beginning of this century the cairn was broken up, and that in it were found the bones of two men, not particularly large, but stout and heavy. (*) Some distance further to the east, in the skirt of the lava on the right-hand side of the road, there is still to be seen the fold erected by the Bareserks, now called Crossfold. It is a common fold, the walls being built up of stone, one lava-block on the top of the other forming the thickness of the wall. Its irregular form, arising from natural lava-formations being utilized for walls, has given the name to it. It is used by the occupier of the land in spring and autumn, and produces yearly a crop of hay." — *Beskr. af Island*, i. 433-34, cf. *Henderson's Iceland*, ii. 62. (*) But in *Eggert Olafsens og Biarne Povensens Reise igiennem Island*, i. 367, it is stated that "in these times the cairn has been dug into, but no remains were found." "These times" must refer to 1754, when the first-named explorer examined the country-sides of Thorsness Thing, and wrote down the diary which formed the basis of the joint work which was published at Soro, 1772, and is still a record of great value. Either the earlier exploration of the cairn was insufficient, or the later is mythical.

(4) "He was in Jomsburg when Styrbiorn the Strong won it." This passage, together with its context, must refer to a lost saga of Biorn the Broadwickers' champion. The capture of Jomsburg by the Swedish prince Biorn, generally known as Styrbiorn, with the surnames of "Svia kappi" (Swedes: champion), or "Sterki" (the Strong), is set forth in the fragmentary record known as "Thattr Styrbjarnar Svia kappa" (Fornmannasogur, v, 245–51). As to the chronology relative to Biorn's banishment, it is difficult to make it agree quite with that of Styrbiorn's life, and his death at the battle of Fyrisfield. Kiartan of Frodis-water was born the same year that Biorn went abroad (p. 75), and in the year, when Christianity was made law of the land, he is stated to have been thirteen or fourteen winters old, and other recensions of our saga give his age as fifteen. Accordingly Biorn ought to have gone abroad A.D. 986, 987, or 988. But the very uncertainty evinced by the various recensions of the saga as to Kiartan's age A.D. 1000, shows that that statement is not of binding importance. Now, reliable records relating to Styrbiorn and King Eric the Victorious of Sweden, state that the latter died ten years after the fall of the former; datable events prove that the year of the king's death was 995, Styrbiorn's, consequently, 985, which thus becomes the very last year that Biorn could have gone abroad to be able to join Styrbiorn at Fyrisfield. No sojourn with Palnatoki or the Jomsburg vikings of any considerable duration could have taken place, for by the utmost stretch the year of Biorn's going abroad cannot be put earlier than 984.

Chapter 31. Of Thorolf Halt-Foot And Snorri The Priest.

That winter at Yule-tide had Thorolf a great drinking, and put the drink round briskly to his thralls, and when they were drunk, he egged them on to go up to Ulfar's-fell and burn Ulfar in his house, and promised to give them their freedom therefor. The thralls .said they would do so much for their freedom if he would hold to his word. Then they went six of them together to Ulfar's-fell, and took a brushwood stack, and dragged it to the homestead, and set fire therein.

At that time Arnkel and his men sat drinking at Lairstead, and when they went to bed they saw fire at Ulfar's-fell. Then they went thereto forthwith, and took the thralls, and slaked the fire, and the houses were but little burned.

The next morning Arnkel let bring the thralls to Vadils-head, and there were they all hanged.

Thereafter Ulfar handselled all his goods to Arnkel, who became guardian over him. But this handselling misliked the sons of Thorbrand, because they deemed that to them belonged all the goods after Ulfar their freedman, and much ill-will arose here from between Arnkel and Thorbrand's sons. Nor might they henceforth have games together, which they had hitherto held, turn and turn about; in which games was Arnkel the strongest, but that man was the best to set against him, and the next strongest, who was called Freystein Rascal, and was the foster-son of Thorbrand, and his adopted son; for it was the talk of most men that his own son he was, but that his mother was a bondmaid. He was a manly man, and mighty of his hands.

Thorolf Halt-foot took it very ill of Arnkel that those thralls had been slain, and claimed atonement for them, but Arnkel flatly refused to pay a penny for them, and then was Thorolf worse pleased than afore.

But on a day he rode out to Holyfell to find Snorri the Priest, and Snorri bade him abide. But Thorolf said he had no need to eat his meat. "Therefor am I come, because I am fain thou shouldst set my matters straight, for I call thee chief of this countryside, and it is thy part to set right the lot of such men as have been wronged already."

"By whose means is thy lot brought low, goodman?" said Snorri.

"Through Arnkel, my son," answers Thorolf.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Said Snorri: "Thou shouldst not make plaint of that, because that thou shouldst be of one mind with him in all things: withal he is a better man than thou."

"That is not the way of it," says he, "because now of all men he tramples most on me, and now will I be thy close friend, Snorri, if thou wilt but take up the blood-suit for my thralls whom Arnkel let slay, nor will I bespeak all the blood-fines for myself."

Snorri answered: "I will not enter into the strife betwixt thee and thy son."

Says Thorolf: "Thou art no friend of Arnkel's; but mayhap thou deemest me niggard of my money. But it shall not be so now," says he. "I know thou wouldst fain have Crowness, and the wood thereon, which is the best possession in the countryside. Lo, I will handsel thee all that, if thou wilt but take up the suit for my thralls, and follow it up so mightily that thou shalt grow greater thereby, but they shall deem themselves put in the wrong who have wrought me shame; nor will I spare any man who has had part therein, be he more or less my kinsman."

Now Snorri deemed that he needed the wood greatly; and so it is said that he took handsel of the land, and took over the blood-suit for the thralls. But Thorolf rode home thereafter, and was well pleased therewith. But that was not talked of over-well by other folk.

In the spring Snorri set forth a case for the Thorsness Thing, at the hand of Arnkel, for the slaying of the thralls. Both sides came thronging to the Thing, and Snorri pushed forward the case. But when the suit came into court, Arnkel claimed for himself a verdict of not guilty, (1) and set that forth as a defence that the thralls were taken with quickfire for the burning of a homestead.

Then Snorri set forth that the thralls were indeed out of the law on the field of deed, "but whereas thou didst bring them in to Vadils-head and slay them there, I deem that there they were not out of the law."

So Snorri pushed the case on, and set aside Arnkel's claim to a verdict of not guilty; and thereafter men busied themselves to make peace, and a bargain was come to, and those brethren, Stir and Vermund, should be umpires in the case; and they put the thralls at twelve ounces each, and the money should be paid there and then at the Thing. And when it was paid, Snorri gave the purse to Thorolf, who took it and said: "I had no mind when I gave thee my land, that thou wouldst follow up my suit with so little manhood, and I wot that Arnkel would not have withheld from me such boot for my thralls if I had left the matter to him."

"Now I say," said Snorri, "that thou hast no shame herein, but I will not stake my worth against thy evil lust and foul deeds."

Thorolf answers: "Most like it is that I shall not seek to thee in cases again; nor yet shall the woes of you folk of this country lie utterly asleep."

Thereafter men depart from the Thing, and Arnkel and Snorri disliked them of this end to the matter, but Thorolf thought worse yet of it, as was well meet.

Chapter 32. The Slaying Of Ulfar; Thorbrand's Sons Claim The Heritage.

So it is said that this happened next to be told of, that Orlig of Orligstead fell sick, and when his sickness grew heavy on him, Ulfar his brother sat ever by him. Now of that sickness he died; but when he was dead, Ulfar sent forthwith for Arnkel, who went straightway to Orligstead, and he and Ulfar took to them all the goods that lay together there. (2) But when Thorbrand's sons knew of the death of Orlig, they went to Orligstead, and laid claim to those same goods that there lay together, and claimed as their own what their

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

freedman had had; but Ulfar said that it was his due to take the heritage after his brother. They asked what part Arnkel would take in this matter. Arnkel said that Ulfar should not be robbed of any man while their fellowship lasted and he might have his will.

Then Thorbrand's sons fare away, and first out to Holyfell, and told this to Snorri the Priest, and prayed him for his help in the case; but he said that he would not thrust into strife with Arnkel for this case, whereas they had done their part so slippery, that Arnkel and Ulfar had first laid hands on the goods. Then Thorbrand's sons said that he would rule there no longer if he did not heed such things as this.

The next autumn Arnkel had a great autumn feast in his house, and ever his wont was to ask Ulfar his friend to all biddings, and to see him off with gifts.

Now the day that men should depart from the feast at Lairstead, Thorolf Halt-foot rode from home, and went to see his friend Cunning-Gils, who dwelt at Thorswater-dale at (3) Cunning-Gils- stead, and bade him ride with him east to Ulfar's-fell-neck, and a thrall of Thorolf's went with him, and when they came on to the neck Thorolf said:

"There will be Ulfar going from the feast, and belike he will journey with seemly gifts about him. Now would I, Cunning-Gils," said he, "that thou go meet him and waylay him under the garth (4) at Ulfar's-fell, and slay him, and therefor will I give thee three marks of silver, and pay all weregild for the slaying; and then, when thou hast slain Ulfar, thou wilt have of him those good things which he has had of Arnkel. Then shalt thou run along Ulfar's-fell out to Crownness, and if any pursue thee let the wood cover thee, and then come and see me, and I shall see to thee that thou shalt take no harm."

Now whereas Cunning-Gils was a man of many children and very poor, he took the bait and went out under the towngarth at Ulfar's-fell, and there he saw how Ulfar came up from below with a good shield and a fair-dight sword that Arnkel had given him. So when they met, Cunning-Gils prayed to see the sword, and flattered Ulfar much, and said he was a great man, since he was deemed worthy to have such seemly gifts from chiefs. Ulfar wagged his beard, and handed to him the sword and shield. Cunning-Gils straightway drew the sword and thrust Ulfar through, and then took to his heels and ran out along Ulfar's-fell to Crownness.

Arnkel was out a-doors and saw how a man ran bearing a shield, and thought he should know the shield, and it came into his mind that Ulfar would not have given it up of his own good will. Then Arnkel called to his folk to run after the man; "and therewith," says he, "if this has befallen by my father's redes, and this man is Ulfar's banesman, then shall ye slay him, whoso he is, and not let him come before my eyes."

Then went Arnkel up to Ulfar's-fell, and there they found Ulfar dead. Thorolf Halt-foot saw Cunning-Gils run out along Ulfar's-fell with the shield, and thought he knew how it had fared between him and Ulfar. Then said he to his thrall that followed him: "Now shalt thou go to Karstead, and tell Thorbrand's sons to fare in to Ulfar's-fell, and not let themselves be robbed this time of their freedman's heritage as before; because Ulfar is now slain." So thereafter Thorolf rode home, and deemed he had done a good piece of business.

But those who ran after Cunning-Gils took him beneath a cliff which leads up from the sea. There they had a true tale out of him, and when he had told them all as it was, they slew him, and thrust him into earth beneath the cliff, but took his spoil and brought it to Arnkel.

Now the thrall of Thorolf came to Karstead, and told Thorbrand's sons the message of Thorolf, and so they went in to Ulfar's-fell; but when they came there, lo, there was Arnkel before them and many men with him. Then Thorbrand's sons gave out their claim to the goods that Ulfar had owned; but Arnkel brought forward against it the witness of those who were near at the handsel Ulfar had given him, and said that he would

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

uphold it, because he said it had never been lawfully called in question, and bade them make no claim to the money; for he said he would hold to it, even as if it were his father's heritage.

Then Thorbrand's sons saw no choice but to come away, and they went once more out to Holyfell and found Snorri the Priest, and told him how things had befallen, and prayed for his help. Snorri said things had gone as before, that they had been one move too late in the game for Arnkel; "and ye shall not," said he, "grip out of Arnkel's hands aught of these goods, seeing that he has already got the chattels to him; and as to the lands, they lie about as near to one as to the other, and he will have them who has the strongest hand. And this is to be looked for herein that Arnkel will have the greater share of that, as in other dealings with you; and to tell truth, ye may well bear what many endure, because Arnkel rules now over every man's fortune in this countryside, and will do while he lives, whether that be longer or shorter."

Thorleif Kimbi answered: "True say'st thou, Snorri, and I deem it is to be excused in thee, though thou dost not set our matter with Arnkel right, since thou hast never held thine own against him in any due case that ye have had to do with together."

Thereafter Thorbrand's sons fared home, and took these things right heavily.

Chapter 33. Of The Death Of Thorolf Halt-Foot.

Now Snorri the Priest let work Crowness wood, and let much wood cutting go on. Thorolf Halt-foot thought that the wood was spoilt thereby, and rode out to Holyfell, and bade Snorri give back the wood, and said that he had lent the wood and not given it. Snorri said that would be clearer when they bore witness who were by at the handselling, and said that he would not give up the wood unless they gave it against him. Then Thorolf took himself off, and was in the worst of minds. He rode in to Lairstead to see his son Arnkel.

Arnkel gave his father good welcome, and asked his errand there. Thorolf answered: "This is my errand, that I see it is amiss that there should be ill-liking betwixt us, and now I will that we lay that aside, and take to kindly ways. For unseemly it is for us to be at enmity together; and moreover it seems to me that we should be great men here in the district with thy hardihood and my good counsel."

"The better it would like me," said Arnkel, "the closer we should draw together."

"Now will I," says Thorolf, "that this shall be the beginning of our peace-making and friendship, that we two claim Crowness wood of Snorri the Priest. It seems to me very ill that he should rule our fortune, but now he will not give up to me my wood, and says I gave it him; and therein he lies," says he.

Arnkel answers: "Thou didst that for no friendship to me when thou gavest Snorri the wood, nor shall I do so much as for thy slandering to quarrel with Snorri about it; and though I wot that he has no due title to the wood, yet will I not that thou have so much for thy lust for evil as to gladden thee by strife twixt me and Snorri."

"Methinks," said Thorolf, "that this comes rather from thy poor heart than because thou begrudgest me sport over your strife."

"Think whatso true thou wilt," said Arnkel, "but as things stand, no strife will I have with Snorri for the wood."

Therewith father and son parted, and Thorolf fared home and liked his lot exceeding ill, and thought that now he might scarce get his oar in.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Thorolf Halt-foot came home in the evening and spake to no man, but sat down in his high-seat and would eat no meat that night, and he sat there after men went to bed, and in the morning, when men arose, there he sat on still, and was dead.

Then the housewife sent a man to Arnkel, and bade him tell him of the death of his father. Then Arnkel rode up to Hvamm, and some of his home-men with him. And when they came to Hvamm, then was Arnkel ware that his father was dead, and sat in his high-seat. But the folk were all full of dread, because to all folk his face seemed loathsome.

Now Arnkel went into the fire-hall, and so up along it behind the seat at Thorolf's back, and bade all beware of facing him before lyke-help was given to him. Then Arnkel took Thorolf by the shoulders, and must needs put forth all his strength before he brought him under. After that he swept a cloth about Thorolf's head, and then did to him according to custom. Then he let break down the wall behind him, and brought him out thereby, (5) and then were oxen yoked to a sledge, and thereon was Thorolf laid out, and they drew him up into Thorswater-dale, and it was not without hard toil that he came to the stead whereas he should lie.

There they laid Thorolf in howe strongly; and then Arnkel rode to Hvamm and took to himself all the goods that were heaped up there, and which his father had owned. Arnkel was there three nights, and nought happed to tell of the while, and thereafter he rode home.

Chapter 34. Thorolf Halt-Foot Walks; The Second Burial Of Him.

After the death of Thorolf Halt-foot many folk deemed it worse to be abroad as soon as the sun was getting low. But as the summer wore, men were ware of this, that Thorolf lay not quiet, and men might never be in peace abroad after sunset. And this happed withal that those oxen which had been yoked to Thorolf were troll-ridden, and all such cattle as came nigh to Thorolf's howe went mad, and bellowed till they died. Now the herdsman at Hvamm often came home in such wise that Thorolf had given chase to him. And so it befell in the autumn at Hvamm that one day neither herdsman nor beasts came home; and in the morning men went to seek them, and found the herdsman dead, a little way from Thorolf's howe, and he was all coal-blue, and every bone in him was broken. He was buried beside Thorolf. And of all the cattle that had been in the dale, some were found dead, and some fled into the mountains, and were never found again; and if fowls settled on Thorolf's howe, they fell down dead.

But so great trouble befell from this that no man durst feed his flocks up in the dale. Oft too was heard huge din abroad at Hvamm, and they were ware withal that the hall was oftentimes ridden. And when the winter came on Thorolf was seen home at the house many a time, and troubled the goodwife the most. And great hurt gat many from this, but she herself was well-nigh witless thereat; and such was the end of it all, that the goodwife died from these troublings, and was brought up to Thorswater-dale and buried beside Thorolf.

Thereafter men fled away from the homestead, and now Thorolf took to walking so wide through the dale that he laid waste all steads therein, and so great was the trouble from his walking that he slew some men, and some fled away; but all those who died were seen in his company.

Now men bewailed them much of that trouble, and deemed that it was Arnkel's part to seek rede to better it. So Arnkel bade all those abide with him who had liefer be there than elsewhere; but whereso Arnkel was, no harm befell from Thorolf and his company.

So afeard were all men of this walking of Thorolf's that none durst go a journey that winter, what errands soever they had in the countryside. But when the winter had worn away the spring was fair; and when the ice was off the earth, Arnkel sent a man into Karstead for the sons of Thorbrand, and bade them go with him and bring Thorolf away from Thorswater-dale, and search for another abode for him.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Then, according to the laws of that time, it was due, as now, for all men, to bring dead folks to burial, if they were so summoned.

But when the sons of Thorbrand heard that, they said it lay nowise on them to put away the troubles of Arnkel or Arnkel's men; but thereat the old carle Thorbrand answered and said: "Nay, need there is," says he, "to fare on all such journeys as all men are bound in law to do, and that is now bidden of you which it beseemeth you not to gainsay."

Then said Thorod to the messenger: "Go thy ways and tell Arnkel that I will go on behalf of my brethren, and come to Ulfar's-fell and meet him there."

Now the messenger goes, and tells Arnkel, and he got ready to go, and he and his were twelve in all, and had with them yoke-oxen and digging tools; and they went first to Ulfar's-fell and met there Thorod, Thorbrand's son, and he and his were three.

They went up over the neck, and came into Thorswater-dale unto Thorolf's howe, and broke it open, and found Thorolf all undecayed, and most evil to look on.

They took him up from the grave, and laid him on a sledge, and yoked two strong oxen to it, and drew him up to Ulfar's-fell-neck, and by then were the oxen foundered, and others were taken that drew him up on to the neck, and Arnkel was minded to bring him to Vadils-head, and lay him in earth there. But when they came to the hill's brow the oxen went mad, and broke loose forthright, and ran thence away over the neck, and made out along the hillside above the garth of Ulfar's-fell, and so out to sea, and by then were both bursten.

But Thorolf was by then so heavy, that they could bring him no further; so they bore him to a little headland that was there beside, and laid him in earth there, and that is called sithence Halt-foot's Head.

Then let Arnkel raise a wall across the headland (6) landward of the howe, so high that none might come thereover but fowl flying, and there are yet signs thereof. There lay Thorolf quiet as long as Arnkel lived.

Chapter 35. Arnkel Slays Hawk.

Snorri the Priest let work Crowness wood for all that Thorolf Halt-foot had raised question about it; but that was seen of Arnkel that he deemed that the title of that wood had not gone according to law, and he deemed that Thorolf had beguiled him of his heritage in that he had given the wood to Snorri the Priest.

Now one summer Snorri the Priest sent his thralls to work in the wood, and they cut there much timber and piled it together, and then went home. Now while the timber was seasoning, the rumour ran that Arnkel would go fetch it. So it fell not out; but he bade a herdsman of his watch when Snorri the Priest let fetch the timber, and tell him thereof. But when the wood was dry, Snorri sent three thralls of his to fetch it; and he got Hawk, his follower, to go with the thralls for their aid. So they go, and bind the wood on twelve horses, and then take their way home. Arnkel's herdsman was ware of their ways, and told him thereof. He took his weapons and went after them, and came up with them west of Svelgriver twixt it and the Knolls, but as soon as he came up with them, Hawk leapt off his horse and thrust at Arnkel with a spear, and smote his shield, yet he gat no wound. Then Arnkel sprang from his horse and thrust with a spear at Hawk, and smote him in the midst, and he fell there on the place which is now called Hawks-river.

But when the thralls saw the fall of Hawk, they took to their heels and ran off on their way home, and Arnkel chased them all along beyond Oxbrents, and then turned back and drave home with him the wood-horses, and took the wood off them, and then let them loose, and bound the load-ropes on them, and they were then turned on their way out along the fell, and they went till they came home to Holyfell.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Now were these tidings told, but all was quiet through those seasons; but the next spring Snorri the Priest set on foot a suit for the slaying of Hawk to be heard at the Thorsness Thing, and Arnkel another for an onslaught for the unhallowing of Hawk. Both sides had great followings at the Thing, and men pushed forward the cases eagerly, but such was the end of it that Hawk was made guilty for the onslaught, and Snorri the Priest was nonsuited.

Therewith men ride home from the Thing, and there was much ill- blood betwixt men throughout the summer.

ENDNOTES:

(1) "Arnkel claimed for himself a verdict of not guilty" — kvaddi Arnkell ser bjargkvithar — literally, demanded Arnkel for himself a saving verdict, which, however, is not an absolute equivalent for the original, because of kvithr having a twofold meaning; first, a sworn-in number of men, consisting, according to the nature of the case, of five, nine, or twelve neighbours; secondly, the utterance, declaration, or verdict of such a body. In its first sense, we take it, kvithr is an "ablaut" development of the root kvath, in the verb kvethja, to call upon, to call out, to levy; while in its second it is a similar development from the same root in the verb kvetha (cf. English quoth), to say, to utter, to state, to declare. The bjargkvithr, then, was both a sort of jury called in to give rebutting evidence in favour of the defendant, and the utterance or declaration given by this body. The bjargkvithr should consist of five persons, nearest neighbours of the defendant; he should call them out of the plaintiff's own so-called "frumkvithr", or original jury, which, if it consisted only of five neighbours, was then bodily called by the defendant; but if it consisted of nine, five out of these, all being nearer neighbours than the remaining four, should be called: ".v. bvar scolo scilia vm biarg quitho alla heimilis bvar thess manz er sottr er nema hann se sottr vith ix. bva quith tha scal hann thathan quethia v. af them bvom ix. til biarg quithar ser tha er naestir ero vetvang them er fra var quatt." (Gragas, i. 69, with still more detailed rulings, p. 65). The object of the bjargkvithr was to declare that the defendant's objection or objections to the finding or findings of the kvithr of the plaintiff, frumkvithr, were, in fact, true.

(2) "(Arnkel and Ulfar) took to them all the goods (of Orlog) that lay together there." Orlog was the freedman of Thorbrand of Swanfirth, and so was Ulfar. The law relating to a freedman's heritage, as it is preserved in Gragas, provides: "A man shall take heritage after his freedman, and after his freedwoman, unless to them has been born a son or a daughter; if the children be legitimate, the heritage falls to the son; if there be no son, then it falls to the daughter. But should they (freedm. or freedw.) die without issue, their goods shall return back to him who gave them their freedom. Should the children of a freed person die without issue, their goods have still to revert to the giver of the freedom, as much thereof, to wit, as the freed persons owned when they died, but should their goods amount to more, then that (the excess) falls to the kinsmen of the freed persons' children," etc., i. a. 227, and elsewhere to the same effect. It is clear that a brother, being a freedman, could not in law inherit a brother who also was a freedman. Thorbrand of Swanfirth was therefore in his right, for he was still alive, in claiming the goods of Orlog, to which Ulfar had no title. Arnkel's interference here was lawless and selfish, seeing that all Ulfar's goods were handselled to him (Chapter XXXI) in a manner that, at least by Thorbrand, was not regarded as good in law.

(3) "at", read in.

(4) "Under the garth" = under the wall surrounding the homefield, tungarthr.

(5) "Then he let break down the wall behind him and brought him out thereby." The death of Thorolf took place very much in the same way as that of Egil's father, Skallagrim, whose temper was somewhat akin to that of Thorolf, being tainted with weird lycanthropy, though his character was of a higher type. Skallagrim called on Egil to pay him the weregild for Thorolf his son, who, in high command in Athelstan's army, had fallen fighting in the battle of Vina, and which the king had entrusted to Egil for the father. But Egil was not

quite ready to give it up, — in fact, never meant to do so. So Skallagrim, having a large hoard of money, makes up his mind to pay the son out, and by night rides to a certain bog-pit, whereinto he sinks his two chests full of money, and afterwards rides home by midnight, goes in his clothes to bed, but is found the next morning sitting in his seat in the hall, dead and stark. Egil goes round by the aisle of the hall, and seizes Skallagrim from behind, and lays him down in the seat and gives him lyke help, i.e., closes his eyes and mouth. Then he bids the southern wall to be broken through, whereby they carried Skallagrim headforemost out into the open. In both these cases the proceedings are practically the same. Both these men died within the same century, Skallagrim early in it, Thorolf late. It would seem that in those times it was customary to teach him who was supposed to be likely to walk again a way to the house which did not lead to the door of it, but to the obstructing wall — a custom which seems to trace its origin to the imagination that ghosts being brainless were devoid of initiative. To this day the belief exists in Iceland that the spirit of the dead visits all localities on earth where the person has been, before it passes to its final destination. This journey is supposed to take a miraculously short time.

(6) "Then let Arnkel raise a wall across the headland," etc. Arni Thorlacius, in *Safn*, ii. 282, says traces are still to be seen of the stone wall which Arnkel caused to be thrown across the headland, which is about three "man-heights" high, precipitous rocks forming its front and flanks, so that the only access to the head is down from the slope above it. Cf. Kalund, *Beskr.* i. 450, and footnote.

Chapter 36. Thorleif Would Slay Arnkel, And Is Slain.

There was a man called Thorleif, an Eastfirther, who had been found guilty of an affair with a woman. He came to Holyfell in the autumn, and prayed Snorri the Priest to take him in, but he put him off, and they talked long together or ever he got him gone. Thereafter Thorleif went to Lairstead, and came there in the evening, and was there the next night.

Now Arnkel got up early in the morning and set to nailing together the boards of his outer door; and when Thorleif arose, he went to Arnkel, and prayed him to take him in.

He answered somewhat slowly, and asked if he had been to see Snorri the Priest.

"Yea, I have seen him," said Thorleif, "and he would nowise take me in; 'and indeed, it is little to my mind,' says he, 'to give following to such a man as will ever let himself be trodden underfoot by every man with whom he has to do.'"

"Meseems," says Arnkel, "that Snorri would nowise mend his bargains though he give thee meat and drink for thy following."

"Nay, here whereas thou art will I have leave to dwell, Arnkel," said Thorleif.

"It is not my wont," said Arnkel, "to take in out-country men."

So there they gave and took in talk awhile, and Thorleif ever held fast by his prayer, but Arnkel put him off.

Now Arnkel fell to boring holes in the door-ledge, and laid his adze down the while. Thorleif took it up, and heaved it up swiftly over his head with the mind to bring it down on Arnkel's skull, but Arnkel heard the whistle of it and ran in under the stroke, and heaved up Thorleif by the breast, and soon was proven the measure of either's strength, for Arnkel was wondrous strong. So he cast Thorleif down with so great a fall that he lay stunned, and the adze flew out of his hand, and Arnkel got hold thereof and smote it into Thorleif's head, and gave him his death-wound.

So the rumour ran that it was Snorri the Priest who sent that man for Arnkel's head, but Snorri made as if the story had nought to do with him, and let folk say what they would. And so those seasons slipped away that nought else is to be told of.

Chapter 37. The Slaying Of Arnkel.

The autumn after, at winter-nights, Snorri the Priest had a great autumn-feast, and bade his friends thereto. Ale drinking they had thereat, and folk drank fast and were very merry with ale.

Now the talk fell on pairing men together (1) by their worth, and as to who was the noblest man in the countryside or the greatest chief, and thereon were men not at one, as oft it haps when the talk falls on likening man to man. To most of them indeed it seemed that Snorri was the noblest man, but some named Arnkel, and Stir forsooth.

But as they talked hereover, then Thorleif Kimbi answered and said:

"Why do men bicker over such a matter," says he, "when all may see how it is?"

"What wilt thou say hereon, Thorleif," said they, "if thou splittest the case into so many fragments?"

"Much the greatest do I deem Arnkel," said he.

"What hast thou to back this with?" said they.

"That which is true," says he. "For I call Snorri the Priest and Stir but as one man, because of their affinity; but of Arnkel's home-men that Snorri has killed, none lie by his garth unatoned like as Hawk, Snorri's follower, whom Arnkel slew, lies here by Snorri's garth."

This men deemed a big word, true though it were, since the talk had gone so far; but hereat dropped that talk.

But whenas men went from the bidding, Snorri the Priest chose gifts for his friends. He led Thorbrand's sons down to their ship at Redwick-head; and as they parted Snorri went to Thorleif Kimbi and said:

"Here is an axe, Thorleif, which I will give thee; it is the longest handled of all I have, yet will it not reach Arnkel's head when he stacks his hay at Orligstead, if thou heaviest it at him all the way from Swanfirth."

He took the axe and said: "Deem well," says he, "that I will not hang back in heaving this axe on Arnkel whenas thou hast wrought the revenge for Hawk thy follower."

Snorri answered: "That methinks is due from you to me, sons of Thorbrand, that ye have spies out to watch for a chance at Arnkel, but blame me then if I come not to meet you when aught may be done if ye make me ware thereof."

Therewith they parted, and both gave out that they were ready to plot against Arnkel's life, and Thorbrand's sons were to have a spy on his goings.

Early that winter was there much ice, and all firths were overlaid therewith. Freystein Rascal watched sheep in Swanfirth, and he was set to spy out an occasion against Arnkel.

Arnkel was a great man for work, and made his thralls work all day from sunrise to sunset. He had under him both the lands of Ulfar's-fell and Orligstead, for no one could be got to dwell on the lands for fear of the

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

violence of Thorbrand's sons. Now in the winter it was Arnkel's wont to carry hay from Orligstead in the night in the new moons, because the thralls did other work at home by day. Nor did he heed if Thorbrand's sons were unaware of the carrying of hay. Now on a night of winter before Yule, Arnkel arose and waked three of his thralls, one of whom was called Ofeig. Goodman Arnkel went with them up to Orligstead. Four oxen they had, and two sledges withal.

The sons of Thorbrand were ware of Arnkel's ways, and Freystein Rascal went that night over the ice to Holyfell, and came there by then men had been abed for a space. He took Snorri by the foot and waked him, and Snorri asked what he would. He answers: "Now has the old eagle taken flight to his quarry at Orligstead."

Snorri rose up and bade men clothe themselves. So when they were clad, they took their weapons and fared nine of them altogether over the ice to Swanfirth. And when they came to the bottom of the firth, Thorbrand's sons came to meet them, and were six in company.

Then they fared up to Orligstead, and by then they came there, one of the thralls had gone home with a load of hay, and Arnkel and the others were busy on a second.

Then saw Arnkel and his folk how armed men came up from the sea, and Ofeig said thereon that unpeace was at hand, and there was nought for it but to get them gone homeward.

Arnkel answered: "Good rede can I give thereto, and now shall we each of us do what each best liketh. Ye shall run home and wake up my following, and they will come quickly to meet me, but here in the rickyard is a good place to make a stand, and from hence will I defend myself if they come in warlike wise, for that meseems is better than running; nor shall I soon be overcome, and speedily will my men come to me, if ye do your errands in manly wise."

So when Arnkel had thus made an end of speaking, the thralls set off a-running; and Ofeig was the swiftest, but so afeard he was that he well-nigh went out of his wits, and ran off into the mountain and fell into a force there and was lost, and that is since called Ofeig's-force. The other thrall ran home to the stead, and when he came to the haybarn there was his fellow-thrall before him carrying in the hay. He called to the thrall as he ran to help bear in the hay to him, and belike the thrall was nowise loth of that work, so he went to help him.

Now it is to be said of Arnkel that he knew how Snorri the Priest and his folk went there, and he tore the runner from under the sledge, and had it up into the garth with him. The garth was very high outside, and within it was heaped up high as well; and a good fighting-stead it was. Hay was in the garth, but the garth-pieces of the stacks were cleared off.

Now when Snorri and his folk came to the garth, it is not told that any words befell there, but straightway they set on Arnkel, and chiefly with spear-thrust, which Arnkel put from him with the sledge-runner, and many of the spear-shafts were broken thereby, nor was Arnkel wounded; but when they had spent their shot-weapons, then Thorleif Kimbi ran at the garth and leapt up on to it with sword drawn, and Arnkel smote at him with the sledge-runner, and Thorleif dropped down away from the stroke out of the garth, and the runner smote against the garth wall, and up therefrom flew a piece of frozen turf; but the sledge-runner was broken at the mortice, and part thereof fell out over the garth. Arnkel had laid his sword and shield against a hayrick, and now he took up his weapons and defended himself therewith; but now he began to gather wounds, and withal they came up into the garth about him. Then Arnkel leapt up on to the hayrick, and defended himself thence for a space, but such was the end of the matter that he fell, and they covered him over there in the garth with hay; and thereafter Snorri and his folk fared home to Holyfell.

Over the slaying of Arnkel, Thormod Trefilson made this stave:

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

"Snorri the fight-strong
Fetched for the wound-fowl
Full feed with war-sword --
Young he, and fame-fulfilled.
O feeders of battle-fowl,
Wild-fire of battle-storm
Clave the life's coffer,
Where Snorri felled Arnkel."

Now it is to be said of Arnkel's thralls, that they went into the house after they had borne the hay in, and did off their skin cloaks.

Then the followers of Arnkel woke and asked where he was. Then was the thrall as one roused up from sleep, and answered: "Yea, forsooth," said he, "he will be fighting with Snorri the Priest at Orligstead."

Then men sprang up and clad themselves, and fared at their swiftest in to Orligstead, and found goodman Arnkel dead. And great grief was that to all men; for that he was the doughtiest of all men of the ancient faith in all matters; the wisest of men, of good mind fashioned, and great-hearted, and the boldest of all men, single-hearted, and exceeding well-ruled. Withal he ever had the better in all lawsuits with whomsoever he had to deal, and therefrom gat he great envy, as was well shown now.

Now they took Arnkel's body and laid it out for burial. Arnkel was laid in howe beside the sea out by Vadils-head, and that is a big howe as big as a big stackgarth.

Chapter 38. The Blood-Suit For Arnkel.

After the slaying of Arnkel, the heritage and blood-suit fell to women, and for this reason the blood-suit was not pushed forward so strongly as men deemed they might have looked for over so noble a man. But atonement was settled for the slaying at the Thing, and the only outlawry was that Thorleif Kimbi should abide abroad for three winters, because on him was laid the death-wound of Arnkel.

But because the blood-suit was not so seemly as men deemed befitted such a chief as was Arnkel, the rulers of the land made this law, that for the time to come no woman and no man under sixteen winters old should be suitors in a blood-suit. And that law has ever been holden to since.

Chapter 39. Of Thorleif Kimbi And His Dealings With Arnbiorn.

Thorleif Kimbi took ship that same summer with chapmen who got ready in Streamfirth, and was a messmate of the masters. In those days was it the wont of chapmen to have no cooks, but the messmates chose by lot from amongst themselves who should have the ward of the mess day by day. (2) Then too was it the wont of all the shipmen to have their drink in common, and a cask should stand by the mast with the drink therein, and a locked lid was over it. But some of the drink was in tuns, and was added to the cask thence as soon as it was drunk out.

Now when they were nigh ready there came one forth upon the ledge of rock by the booths. This man was great of growth, and had a bundle on his back, and seemed to men somewhat uncouth. He asked for the ship-master, and he was shown to his booth. So he laid down his bag at the booth-door and went into the booth, and asked if the skipper would give him a passage over the sea.

They asked him of his name, and he called himself Arnbiorn, the son of Asbrand of Combe, and said he fain would fare out and seek Biorn his brother, who had gone out some winters before, and had not been heard of since he went to Denmark.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

The Eastmen said that the bulk was bound down, and they deemed it might not be undone. He said he had not more faring goods than might lie on the top of the bulk. But whereas they deemed him to have great need of faring, they took him to them, but he found himself in victual, and abode on the forecastle.

In his bag were three hundreds in wadmál, (3) and twelve skins for sale, (4) and his victual.

Now Arnbiorn was of good help and a brisk man, and the chapmen held him of good account.

They had a fair passage out and made Hordaland, and took land at an outskerry, and dight their victuals on land.

Thorleif Kimbi was the allotted mess-ward, and had to make porridge. Arnbiorn was aland and made porridge for himself, and had the mess-kettle which Thorleif was to have afterwards. Then went Thorleif aland and bade Arnbiorn give him his kettle, but he had not yet made his own porridge, but stirred the kettle while Thorleif stood over him. Now the Eastmen called aland from the ship and bade Thorleif get ready the meat, and said that he was just an Icelander because of his laziness. Then Thorleif lost his temper, and caught up the kettle and cast out Arnbiorn's porridge, and then turned away.

Arnbiorn had the stirring-stick in his hand, and therewith he smote at Thorleif and caught him on the neck, and the blow was not great, but whereas the porridge was hot, Thorleif was scalded on his neck. Then Thorleif said:

"These Northmen shall not mock us, since we be here two fellow-countrymen together, that they must needs drag us apart like dogs; but I shall mind me of this when we are together in Iceland."

Arnbiorn answered nought. So they lay there three nights before they had a wind for land; then they brought their goods ashore.

Thorleif gusted there, but Arnbiorn took ship with certain traders east to Wick, and thence to Denmark to seek for his brother Biorn.

Chapter 40. Of Biorn, The Champion Of The Broadwickers, And His Dealings With Thurid Of Frodis-Water.

Thorleif Kimbi was two winters in Norway, and then went back to Iceland with the same chapmen as he had fared out with. They made Broadfirth and came to Daymeal-ness, and Thorleif went home to Swanfirth in the autumn, and made much of himself as his manner was.

That same summer came out to Lavahaven-mouth those brothers Biorn and Arnbiorn, and Biorn was afterwards called the Champion of the Broadwickers. Arnbiorn had by then brought home a pretty penny; and as soon as he came aland that summer he bought him land at Bank in Lavahaven, and set up house there the next spring. That winter he spent at Cnear with Thord Walleye, his brother-in-law. Arnbiorn was not a man for show, and was of few words in most matters, yet the stoutest and manliest of men in every wise. But Biorn his brother was a very stately man when he came out, and fair was his mien, for that he had shaped himself after the customs of outland chiefs. A far goodlier man was he than Arnbiorn, and in nothing of less skill than he, and in hardihood far more proven, for thereby he had gained renown in the outlands.

Now in the summer, when these were new come out, was appointed a great meeting of men north of the heath under Howebrent, in from Frodis-mouth. So those chapmen rode thither all of them, in coloured raiment, and when they came to the assembly, there were many there before them, and Thurid withal the goodwife of

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Frodis-water, and Biorn went to talk with her; and no man laid a word on them therefor, for they deemed that it was to be looked for that they should have much to say to each other, so long as it was since they met last.

Now that day men gave and took wounds, and one man from the Northcountry-men was brought to his death, and he was borne into a copse that was on the ere, and much blood ran from his wounds, and there stood a pool of blood in the copse. There was the youngling Kiartan, the son of Thurid of Frodis-water, with a little axe in his hand; he ran to the copse, and dipped the axe in the blood.

But when the folk from the south side of the heath rode south from the meeting, Thord Walleye asked Biorn how things had gone in the talk betwixt him and Thurid of Frodis-water. Biorn seemed well pleased thereabout. Then Thord asked Biorn if he had seen that day the youngling Kiartan, the son of Thurid and Thorod and them all together.

"Yea, I saw him," cried Biorn.

"In what wise didst thou deem of him?" said Thord.

Then sang Biorn this stave:

"The young tree I saw there, the eager-eyed sapling,
The youngling, the very own image of her,
That gem-bestrewn table; he ran to the tree-grove,
Whence the brook of the Wolf, even Fenrir, was welling.
They who waste wide the flame of Morn's river, meseemeth
Have been hitherto heedful to hide from the stripling
The name of the father who erewhile begat him,
He who speedeth the steeds of the streams of the Ocean."

Then said Thord: "What will Thorod now say as to which of you two owns the swain?"

Then sang Biorn yet again:

"Then the slender-sweet fir-tree of Thorod, that beareth
The fells goodly-fashioned shall find of my guessing,
That truly I guessed it -- Ah, surely the coif-field,
The snow-white of women, erewhile well hath loved me --
If so it befell that the kin-famous woman,
The table of jewels, bore son like my body
Now, whatso betideth I weary in longing
For that Valkyr of flame of the sea-flood a-roaring."

Thord said: "Yea, but it must now be thy rede to have but little to do with her, and to turn thy mind from thence whereas she is."

"Good rede," said Biorn; "yet far is it from my mind, though I have to do with somewhat over-mighty a man whereas her brother Snorri is."

"See to that thyself," said Thord; and therewithal they dropped their talk. And now Biorn went home to Combe, and there took on him the ruling of the house, because his father was by then dead. He betook himself anew to a journey north over the heath to meet Thurid that winter, and though Thorod misliked it, yet he deemed it no easy thing for him to better matters; for his mind told him how hardly he had fared whenas he had made trouble of their ways aforetime, and he saw that Biorn was now far mightier than heretofore.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

But Thorod made a bargain that winter with Thorgrima Witch-face that she should bring a storm on Biorn as he went over the heath; and on a day Biorn fared to Frodis-water, and in the evening when he was ready to go home the weather waxed thick, and somewhat it rained, and he withal was rather late ready; but when he came upon the heath cold grew the weather, and the snow drave down, and so dark it was that he might not see the road before him. Then came on a storm, with such hail that he might scarce keep his feet, and his clothes, which before had got wet through, took to freezing on him, and he was so wildered withal that he knew not which way he turned; but in the night he found a cave in the rocks and went therein and abode there that night, and cold harbour he had. There sang Biorn:

"The Goddess of sea-flame, the weed-wearer, surely
Heavy-hearted would wax if of me she were wotting;
If she heard of my plight here, and how I am lying
All amidst of ill weather, the woe of the woodland.
If the Goddess of wildfire of waves did but know it,
How the heeder, the herder of yoke-beasts that labour
The field of the sea-flood, is lying alone
All starven with cold in the cave of the stone-heaps!"

And still he sang:

"With the boards was I shearing the icy cold swan-field;
From the East in the laden keel fared I erewhile;
So hard and so hard there the dear bride she drew me;
So fast and so fast in her love was I bounden.
Weary wet-worn I was as we wended thereover
The highway of waves; and now all heart-heavy
The grove of the battle in cave hath abiding
Instead of the fair woman's bolster beneath him."

Biorn was out in the cave for three days before the storm abated, and by then he left the heath it was the fourth day, and so he came home to Combe much wearied; but the home-men asked of him where he had been amidst the storm; and Biorn sang:

"Time was when my deeds neath the banner well warded
That Styrbiorn was bearing, were blazoned abroad,
Whenas Eric the Iron-coat fared in the field,
And smote down the host in the din of the spear-flight.
Now wandering, bewildered I trod the heath over,
And wended my ways in the teeth of the sleet-drift,
That was wrought but for me by the spell-working wife;
For the wide way, the waste, was o'er ill for the tracking."

So Biorn abode at home the winter through; but in the spring Arnbiorn his brother set up house at Bank in Lavahaven, while Biorn abode still at Combe, and kept a noble house.

ENDNOTES:

(1) "Now the talk fell on pairing men together." This was an amusement in which the men of old were fond to indulge, highly mischievous though mostly it proved, even as here was the case. The best sport in man-pairing, "mannjafnathr", on record, is that provoked by King Eystein of Norway, when he selected for his pair, "jafnatharmann", his own brother, Sigurd the Jerusalem-farer. — "Heimskringla", 681 (also Morkinskinna, 186–187, and Fornmannasogur, vii. 118).

(2) Ward of the mess, mess-ward, "butharvorthr". We have advisedly translated this compound thus, both here and in Chapter XLIII, in spite of the interpretation of the Dictionary, for this is obviously the meaning

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

imparted to the term by the author of our saga: "halda butharvorth" (Eb. 69, 13–14), "hljota butharvorth" (ib. 78, 10), can only mean literally to hold, to get by lot, the ward of the "buth". "Vorthr", therefore, does not mean "cibus", meat, here, but the word meaning "cibus". victual, is "buth", as in "buthar-beini" = meat-treatment, consisting of greens, which the record states in the immediately preceding line were duly "mat-buin" = prepared for meat (Heilagramannasogur, ii. 424, and note 4). "Buth" would then really seem to be = mat-buth, meat preparation, hence the prepared meat itself, mess. When "buthar-vorthr" is made to mean meat, mess, that use of the compound seems to depend on the feeling that "vorthr", ward = "verthr", meal, meat, and is but a translation of "buth" in its obsolete sense of meat, mess. "Buth", though mostly occurring as a term neutral of state, condition, has preserved its active force in "umbuth", the doing round, wrapping, bandaging.

(3) "In his bag were three hundreds in wadmal," meaning wadmal, homespun, or russet of the length of 360 standard ells, consequently of the current value of so many ells. Alin, oln = ell, was: a standard of measure = 18 5/7 inches, or the length that an average human arm was supposed to measure from the elbow-joint to the tip of the longest finger; a standard of value:

6 ells making 1 eyrir = ounce (8 ounces = mark),
48 ells making 1 mork = mark (*) (2 « marks = hundred),
120 ells making 1 hundred.

(*) Mark and ounce were also measures of weight: 8 ounces = 1 mark, 20 marks making 1 farthing, "fjorthungr", 8 farthings making 1 weight, "vaett".

(4) For "twelve skins for sale", read twelve cloaks of marketable russet or wadmal.

Chapter 41. Of Thorleif Kimbi And Thord Wall-Eye.

That same spring at the Thorsness Thing, Thorleif Kimbi fell to wooing a wife, and prayed for Helga, daughter of Thorlak of Ere, and sister of Steinthor of that ilk; and Thormod her brother pressed this forward most, he who had to wife Thorgerd, daughter of Thorbrand, and sister of Thorleif Kimbi. But when the matter came before Steinthor, he took it up coldly, and must ask counsel of his brothers. So then they went to Thord Wall-eye, and when the matter was laid before him, he answered thus:

"I will not put this affair off on to other men, for herein may I be the shaper; so this I have to say to thee, Thorleif, that first must the porridge spots on thy neck be healed, wherewith thou wast burnt when thou wast beaten in Norway three winters ago, or ever I give thee my sister."

Thorleif answered: "I know not what my fortune may be therein; but whether that be avenged or not," says he, "my will it is that three winters pass not ere thou be beaten."

Thord answered: "I sit without fear in despite of thy threats."

But the next morning men had a turf-play beside the booth of the sons of Thorbrand, and as Thorlak's sons passed by, forth flew a great piece of turf, and smote Thord Wall-eye under the poll, and so great was the stroke, that he fell heels over head; but when he arose, he saw that Thorbrand's sons were laughing at him hugely. Then Thorlak's sons turned back and drew their swords, and they ran to meet one another, and forthwith they fought together, and some were wounded, but none slain.

Steinthor had not been there, for he had been in talk with Snorri the Priest. So when they were parted, folk strove to bring about peace; and so it was settled that Snorri and Steinthor should be umpires in the matter. So the wounds of men and the onset were set one against the other, but the remnant over was atoned for; and all

were called at one again whenas they rode home.

Chapter 42. Thorbrand's Sons Make An Onslaught On Arnbiorn.

That summer a ship came out into Lavahaven-mouth, and another to Daymealness. Snorri the Priest rode to the ship at Lavahaven, and fourteen men with him; but when they came south over the heath to Dufgusdale, six men all-armed rode after them, and there were the sons of Thorbrand. Snorri asked whither they were minded to fare, but they said they would go to the ship at Lavahaven-mouth. Snorri said that he would do their errands for them, and bade them go back home and not raise quarrels betwixt men; and he said that often little was needed for that matter among those who were unfriends together already, if they should chance to meet.

Thorleif Kimbi answered: "It shall not be told of us that we durst not ride through the countryside because of the Broadwickers; but thou mayest well ride home, if thou darest not to ride on thy ways when thou hast an errand."

Snorri answered nought, and so they rode forth over the necks, and so forth to Templegarth, and then west over the sands along the sea; but when they came anigh to the Mouth, Thorbrand's sons rode from the company up to Bank; and when they came to the homestead they leapt off their horses and were minded to enter, but might not break open the door. Then they leapt up on to the house, and fell to unroofing it.

Arnbiorn took his weapons, and warded himself from the inside of the house. He thrust out through the thatch, and that became woundsome to them. This was early in the morning, and the weather was bright and clear; and that morning had those of Broadwick arisen early, with the mind to ride to the ship; but when they came west of the shoulder of the fell, then saw they a man in coloured clothes up on the house-roof at Bank, and they wotted well that it was not the attire of Arnbiorn. Then Biorn and his folk spurred on their horses, and turned their way thitherward.

But when Snorri the Priest was ware that the sons of Thorbrand had ridden away from his company, he rode after them, and by then he and his came to Bank were those others working at their maddest for the unroofing of the house. Then Snorri bade them begone thence, nor work any unpeaceful deeds in his company, so whereas they had got no entrance there, they even gave up the onset as Snorri bade, and rode thereafter to the ship with Snorri.

Now those of Broadwick came to the ship that same day, and either side went with their own band, and great ill-will there was, and cross looks enow, but neither side set on another, yet the men of Broadwick were the most in number at the market. Snorri the Priest rode in the evening south to Templegarth, whereas Biorn dwelt as then with his son Guest, who was the father of Templegarth-Ref. The folk of Biorn the Champion of the Broadwickers offered Arnbiorn to ride after those of Snorri the Priest, but Arnbiorn would not have it so, but said that each should have what he had got. Those of Snorri rode home the next day, and the sons of Thorbrand were worse content with their lot than heretofore. And now the autumn began to wear.

Chapter 43. Of Egil The Strong.

Now goodman Thorbrand had a thrall who was called Egil the Strong, the biggest and strongest of men, and he thought his life ill in that he was no free man, and would oft pray Thorbrand and his sons to give him his freedom, and offered to do therefor any such work as he might. So one evening Egil went with his sheep out to Burgdale in Swanfirth, and as the evening grew late, he saw an erne fly from the west over the firth. Now a great deerhound was with Egil, (1) and lo, the erne swooped on the hound, and took him up in her claws, and flew back west over the firth straight for the howe of Thorolf Haltfoot, and vanished there, under the

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

mountain; and a foreboding of tidings Thorbrand deemed this.

Now it was the wont of the Broadwickers in autumn, about the time of winter-nights, to have ball-play under the shoulder south of Cnear, and the place thereafter was called the Playhall-meads, and men betook themselves thither from all the countryside, and great play-halls were made there, wherein men abode and dwelt there a half month or more. Many chosen men there were as then in the countryside, and it was thickly peopled. Most of the young men were at the plays, except Thord Wall-eye; but he might not deal therein because of his too great eagerness, though he was not so strong that he might not play for that cause. So he sat on a chair and looked on the play. Those brethren withal, Biorn and Arnbiorn, were not deemed meet to play because of their strength, unless they played one against the other.

That same autumn Thorbrand's sons fell to talk with Egil that he should go to the ball-play and slay some one of the Broadwickers, either Biorn or Thord or Arnbiorn, in some wise, and that he should have his freedom after therefor; and some men say that that was done by Snorri's rede, and that he had so counselled that the thrall should try if he might get into the hall by stealth, and thence whereas he lurked do somewhat for the wounding of men; and he bade him go down the pass which is above Playhalls, and go down thence when the meal-fires were kindled; for he said it was mostly the way of the weather that a wind would blow off the lava in the evening and drive the smoke up into the pass. So he bade him abide his time to go down till the pass should be full of smoke.

Egil betook himself to this journey, and went first west over the firths, and asked after the sheep of the Swanfirthers, and made as if he were going a sheep-gleaning.

Now whilst he was on his way, Freystein Rascal was to watch the sheep in Swanfirth. So in the evening, when Egil had gone from home, Freystein went west over the river to the sheep, and when he came to that scree which is called Geirvor, and which goes down west of the river, he saw a man's head lying trunkless there and uncovered, and the head sang this stave:

"With man's blood Geirvor
Is reddened over,
The skulls of men-folk
Shall she cover."

He told Thorbrand of this foreboding, and Thorbrand deemed that tidings might well be looked for.

Now it is to be told of Egil that he went west along the firths, and up into the mountain east from Buland's-head, and so south over the mountain, and laid his course so that he went down into the pass by Playhalls, and there lay hid the day long and looked on the play. Now Thord Wall-eye sat by the play, and he said:

"I wot not what thing I see up in the pass there, whether it be a fowl, or a man lying in hiding; it comes up at whiles, and certes," said he, "it is something quick, and methinks it were well done to go look to it."

But no other man saw that, and therefore no search was made.

Now that day Biorn the Champion of the Broadwickers was chosen by lot as mess-ward along with Thord Wall-eye; and Biorn was to light the fire, and Thord to fetch the water; and so when the fire was made, the smoke hung about the pass, even as Snorri had guessed. So Egil went down along the smoke, and made for the hall whenas the play was not yet over, though the day was far spent; and the fires began to burn up, and the hall was full of the reek.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Egil made his way thither. He had got very stiff coming over the mountain, and lying afterwards in the pass. Tasselled shoe-ties he had, after the fashion of those days, and one of the thongs got loose, and the tassel dragged behind as the thrall went into the porch of the hall. But when he went into the main-hall he would fain go softly, for there he saw how Biorn and Thord sat by the fire, and he deemed well that in a short while he would win him a free life for ever.

But now, when he would step over the threshold, he trod on the tasselled thong which dragged, and when he put forth his other foot, the thong stuck fast, and therewith he tottered over, and fell in on the floor with as great fall and clatter as if the carcass of a flayed ox had been cast down.

Then Thord sprang up and asked what fiend fared there. And therewith up leapt Biorn, and got hold of the thrall or ever he gat to his feet, and asked him who he was.

"Egil it is, goodfellow Biorn," said he.

Biorn asked: "What Egil?"

"Egil of Swanfirth," says he.

Then Thord took his sword and would slay him, but Biorn caught hold of Thord and bade him not slay the man so hastily, "for we will first have a true tale of him."

Then Thord held back, and so they did fetters on the feet of Egil, but in the evening, when men came home to the hall, Egil told in such wise that all men might hear it, what journey he had been minded to make of it. So there he abode the night long. But in the morning they brought him up into the pass which is now called Egil's pass, and slew him there.

But there was a law in those days that what man soever slew a thrall from any man should bring home the thrall's-gild therefor, and must begin his journey before the third sun after the slaying of the thrall. And the weregild was to be twelve ounces of silver, and if it were brought home according to law, no blood-suit lay for the slaying of the thrall.

So after the slaying of Egil, those of Broadwick took that rede, to bring home the thrall's-gild according to law. They chose out thirty men thence from Playhalls, and a band of picked men was that. And these rode north over the heath, and gusted that night with Steinthor of Ere, and he betook himself to faring with them. So going thence they were sixty in company, and rode in over the firths, and were the next night at Bank, with Thormod, Steinthor's brother. Then they called on Stir and Vermund their kinsmen to go with them, and were then eighty men in all.

Then sent Steinthor a man to Holyfell, for he would know what rede Snorri the Priest would take to, when he heard of the gathering of folk.

But when the messenger came to Holyfell, there sat Snorri the Priest in his high-seat, nor was aught changed in his dwelling, and Steinthor's messenger was nowise ware what Snorri was minded to do. So when he came out to Bank he told Steinthor of what betid at Holyfell. Steinthor answered that it was to be looked for that Snorri would bear the law of men; "and if he fare not into Swanfirth, I see not to what end we have need of that force of ours; therefore I will that men fare peaceably, though we uphold our cases at law."

"Meseems, kinsman Thord," says he, "that ye Broadwickers had best abide behind here; because there needeth but the least thing to set you by the ears, ye and Thorbrand's sons."

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Thord answered: "Verily I shall go, nor shall Thorleif Kimbi have therewith to jeer at me, that I durst not bring home a thrall's- gild."

Then spake Steinthor to those brethren, Biorn and Arnbiorn: "That will I," says he, "that ye abide behind with twenty men."

Biorn said: "I will not strive to be in thy fellowship beyond what seemeth good to thee, but never before has it happed to me to be driven from any company. Meseems," says he, "that Snorri the Priest will be deep enough in his redes. I am not foreseeing," quoth Biorn, "yet my mind misgiveth me, that such things may befall in this journey, that thou may'st not deem thy men over-many or ever we meet again."

Steinthor answered: "I shall rule over all while I am anigh, though I be not so deeply wise as Snorri the Priest."

"That may'st thou do as for me, kinsman," said Biorn.

Thereafter rode away from Bank Steinthor and his men, some sixty in company, in over the Skeid to Drapalith, and so in over Waterneck-head, and across the Swallow-river-dale, and made thence inward for Ulfar's-fell-neck.

Chapter 44. The Battle In Swanfirth.

Snorri the Priest had sent word to his neighbours that they should bring their boats under Redwick-head; and he went thither with his home-men as soon as Steinthor's messenger was gone; and he went not before, because he thought he saw that the man had been sent to spy over his doings. So Snorri went up Swanfirth, and had nigh fifty men with three keels, and came to Karstead before Steinthor and his men. But when folk saw the coming of Steinthor and his men, the sons of Thorbrand cried out to go meet them, "and let them not get entry into the home-field, for that we have both a great company and a goodly."

Now they who were there were eighty men. But Snorri said: "Nay, we will not ward the homestead from them, and Steinthor shall have the law, for peaceably and wisely will he fare in his redes. So I will that all men abide within, and let no man cast any vain words at them in such wise as that the troubles of men be eked thereby."

With that all men went into the chamber, and men sat on the benches. But the sons of Thorbrand walked up and down the floor.

Now Steinthor and his folk rode up to the door; and for him it is said that he was in a red kirtle, and had pulled up the front skirts through his belt. A fair shield he had, and a helm, and was girt with a sword that was cunningly wrought; the hilts were white with silver, and the grip wrapped round with the same, but the strings thereof were gilded.

Steinthor and his folk leapt off their horses, and he went up to the door, and made fast to the doorpost a purse wherein were twelve ounces of silver. (2) Then he named witnesses to the thrall's-gild being brought home according to law. The door was open, and a certain handmaid stood thereby, and heard the naming of the witnesses. Then she went into the chamber and said:

"Yea, both things are true, that Steinthor of Ere is a manly man, and moreover that he spoke well when he brought the thrall's- gild."

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

But when Thorleif Kimbi heard that, he ran out with the other sons of Thorbrand, and then all went forth who were in the chamber. Thorleif came first to the door, and saw where Thord Walleye stood before the doorway with his shield; but even therewith Steinthor went forth into the homefield. Thorleif took a spear which stood there in the doorway, and thrust it at Thord Wall-eye, and the thrust smote his shield and glanced off it unto the shoulder, and that was a great wound. After this men ran out and there was battle in the home-mead, and Steinthor was of the eagerest, and smote on either hand of him. But when Snorri the Priest came out he bade men stay the unpeace, and bade Steinthor ride away from the homestead, and said that he would not suffer men to ride after them. So Steinthor and his folks fared adown the mead, and men parted in such wise.

But when Snorri the Priest came back to the door, there stood Thorod his son with a great wound in his shoulder, and he was then twelve winters old. Snorri asked who had brought that about.

"Steinthor of Ere," said he.

And Thorleif Kimbi answered and said: "Now has he rewarded thee in meet wise, for that thou wouldst not have us chase him; but my rede it is that we part not thus."

"Yea, so shall it be now," said Snorri, "that we shall have more dealings with them." And he bade Thorleif withal tell the men to follow after them.

Now Steinthor and his folk were come down from the field when they saw the chase, and therewith they crossed the river and turned up on to the scree Geirvor, and made them ready for a stand; for a good fighting-stead was that because of the stones. But as Snorri's company came up the scree, Steinthor cast a spear over Snorri's folk for his good luck, according to ancient custom; (3) but the spear sought a mark for itself, and in its way was Mar, the kinsman of Snorri, who was straightway put out of the fight. So when that was told Snorri the Priest, he answered: "It is well that men should see," says he, "that he is not always in the best case that goeth the last."

So then befell a great battle, and Steinthor was at the head of his own folk, and smote on either hand of him; but the fair-wrought sword bit not whenas it smote armour, (4) and oft he must straighten it under his foot. He made most for the place whereas was Snorri the Priest.

Stir Thorgrimson set on fiercely with Steinthor his kinsman, and his first hap was that he slew a man of the folk of Snorri the Priest, his son-in-law; but when Snorri saw that he cried to Stir:

"Thus, forsooth, thou avengest Thorod, the son of thy daughter, whom Steinthor of Ere has brought unto death; the greatest of dastards art thou."

Stir looked on him and said: "Speedily I may atone for that;" and he shifted his shield withal, and turned to the side of Snorri the Priest, and slew another man, but this time a man of Steinthor's band.

Now even herewith came up from Longdale the father and son, Aslak and Illugi the Red, and sought to go between them. Thirty men they had with them, and to that company joined himself Vermund the Slender.

So then they prayed Snorri the Priest to let stay the slaughter of men, and Snorri bade the Ere-dwellers come up and make a truce. Then Aslak, he and his, bade Steinthor take truce for his men. So Steinthor bade Snorri reach forth his hand, and he did so; but therewith Steinthor raised his sword aloft and cut at Snorri's arm, and great was the clatter of the stroke, for it smote the stall-ring, and well-nigh struck it asunder, but Snorri was nowise wounded.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Then cried out Thorod Thorbrandson: "No truce will they have! Well then, let us set on, and stay not till all the sons of Thorlak are slain."

But Snorri the Priest answered: "Turmoil enow it would bring to the countryside if all sons of Thorlak were slain, and the truce shall be holden to if Steinthor will, after the word aforesaid."

Then all bade Steinthor take the truce; and things went so far, that a truce was declared betwixt man and man until such time as they came back each one to his home.

Now it is to be told of the Broadwick folk that they knew how Snorri the Priest had fared with a flock to Swanfirth. So they take their horses and ride after Steinthor at their swiftest, and they were on Ulfar's-fell-neck whiles the fight was on the scree; and some men say that Snorri the Priest saw Biorn and his folk as they came up on the hill's brow, whenas he happened to turn and face them, and that for that cause he was so easy in the terms of the truce with Steinthor and his men.

So when Biorn and Steinthor met at Orligstead, Biorn said that matters had gone even after his guessing. "And my rede it is," said he, "that ye turn back now, and drive them hard."

But Steinthor said: "Nay, I will hold to the truce I have made with Snorri the Priest, in whatso ways matters may go betwixt us hereafter."

Thereafter they ride each to his own home, but Thord Wall-Eye lay wounded at Ere. In the fight at Swanfirth five men had fallen of Steinthor's company, and two of Snorri the Priest; but many were wounded on either side, for the fight had been of the hardest. So says Thorrood Trefilson in his Raven-lay:

"The feeder of swans
Of wound-wave, in Swanfirth
Made the erne full
With feeding of wolfs' meat.
There then, let Snorri
Of five men the life-days
Cut off in sword-storm:
Such way shall foes pay."

Thorbrand had been at the fight, and busied himself with Aslak and Illugi in going between the fighters, and had urged them to seek peace. So he thanked them well for their aid, as well as Snorri the Priest for his avail.

Snorri the Priest went home to Holyfell after the fight, and it was settled that Thorbrand's sons should be turn and turn about at Holyfell and at home at Swanfirth till these affairs were ended, because there was yet the greatest ill-blood about, as was like to be, since no truce there was betwixt man and man as soon as men should be home from the fight.

Chapter 45. The Battle In Swordfirth.

That summer, before the fight was in Swanfirth, a ship had come to Daymeal-ness, as is aforesaid. Now Steinthor of Ere had bought a ten-oarer at the ship; but when he was to bring it home there fell on him a great gale from the west, and they drave east past Thors-ness, and landed at Thinghall-ness, and laid the keel up in Gruflunaust, and went thence afoot over the necks to Bank, and thence fared home in a boat; but the ten-oarer he had not been able to go fetch through the autumn, so it lay still at Gruflunaust.

But one morning a little before Yule, Steinthor rose early, and said that he would go fetch his craft that lay east at Thinghall-ness; and there betook them to faring with him his brothers Bergthor and Thord Wall-eye,

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

whose wound was by now pretty much healed, so that he was meet enow to carry weapons. Withal in Steinthor's company were two Eastmen, and they were eight in all.

So they were ferried over the firth into Dairyhead, and they went afoot in towards Bank, and thence came Thormod, their brother, who made the ninth of them. Now the ice stretched from Templesteadwick right up to Much Bank, and they went up along the ice, and so over the neck to Swordfirth, which lay all under ice. Such is the way of it, that when the sea ebbs, it leaves it all dry, and the ice lies on the mud at the ebb; but the skerries that were in the firth stood up above the ice, which was much broken about one of them, and the icefloes sloped down steeply from the skerry. Loose snow withal had fallen on the ice, and very slippery it was thereon.

Now Steinthor and his folk went to Thinghall-ness, and pushed out the boat from the boatstand, and took out of her both oars and deck, and laid them down on the ice, together with their clothes and the heaviest of their weapons. Then they dragged the craft in along the firth, and then west over the low neck to Templesteadwick, and right out to the edge of the ice; and then went after their clothes and the other matters. But as they went back into Swordfirth, they saw six men going from the south from Thinghall-ness, who went a great pace over the ice, and made for Holyfell. Then Steinthor and his men misdoubted them, that there would be going the sons of Thorbrand minded for the Yule-feast at Holyfell. Then Steinthor with his folk went swiftly out over the firth to the place where lay their clothes and weapons; and so it was as Steinthor had deemed, and these men were the sons of Thorbrand.

So when these beheld men running down the firth, they deemed they knew who they were, and thought the men of Ere were fain to meet them. So they fell to going at a great pace, and made for the skerry with the mind to make a stand there; and in this wise each came nigh to meeting the other, yet the sons of Thorbrand reached the skerry first. But as Steinthor and his folk came forth past the skerry, Thorleif Kimbi let drive a spear against their flock, and it smote Bergthor, son of Thorlak, in the midst, and straightway was he put out of the fight. Then he went away out on to the ice, and lay down, and Steinthor and his folk set on toward the skerry, but some went after their weapons. The sons of Thorbrand warded themselves well and in manly wise, and a good fighting-stead they had there, because the floes sloped steeply from the skerry and were wondrous slippery; thus wounding went slowly betwixt men, before those came back who had gone to fetch the weapons.

Steinthor and his men set on, six together, on the skerry, but the Eastmen went out on to the ice within bowshot, for they had bows, and there with they shot against those on the skerry, and gave many a wound.

Thorleif Kimbi cried out when he saw Steinthor draw his sword: "White hilts dost thou still wield aloft, Steinthor," says he; "but I wot not if thou raisest yet again a soft brand withal, as thou didst last autumn at Swanfirth."

Steinthor answers: "Ah! I will that thou prove ere we part whether I bear a soft brand or not."

Now slow work was the winning of the skerry, but when they had been thereat a long while, Thord Wall-eye made a dash at it, and would thrust at Thorleif Kimbi with a spear, for he was ever the foremost of his men. The thrust smote the shield of Thorleif, but even as Thord Wall-eye laboured over the blow his feet failed him on the slippery floe, and he fell on his back and slipped headforemost down from the skerry. Thorleif Kimbi leapt after him to smite him dead before he could get to his feet again, and Freystein Rascal followed Thorleif, and he had shoe-spikes on his feet. Then Steinthor ran thereto, and cast his shield over Thord even as Thorleif fetched a blow at him, and with the other hand he smote at Thorleif Kimbi, and smote the leg from him below the knee; and while that was a-doing Freystein Rascal thrust at Steinthor, aiming at his middle; and when Steinthor saw that, he leapt up aloft, and the thrust went between his legs, and these three things, whereof we have told even now, he did in one and the same nick of time. Then he ran to Freystein,

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

and smote him on the neck with his sword, and loud was the clatter of that stroke. So he cried withal: "Art smitten, Rascal?"

"Smitten forsooth," said Freystein, "but yet no more than thou didst deem, for no wound have I therefrom." For in a hooded hat of felt was Freystein, with horn sewn into the neck thereof, and on that had the stroke fallen.

Then Freystein Rascal turned back skerryward, but Steinthor bade him run not, since he had no wound, and Freystein turned him round on the skerry, and now they made at each other hard and fast. Steinthor was in great risk of falling, for the floe was both steep and slippery, but Freystein stood firm on his spiked shoes, and smote both hard and oft; but such was the end of their dealings, that Steinthor brought his sword down on Freystein above his hips, and smote the man asunder in the midst.

Then they went on to the skerry, and stayed not till all Thorbrand's sons were fallen. Then cried out Thord Wall-eye that they should go betwixt head and trunk of all the sons of Thorbrand, but Steinthor said he had no will to bear weapons on men who lay a-low.

So they came down from the skerry, and went to where Bergthor lay, who scarce had might to speak. So they brought him with them in over the ice, and so over the neck to the boat, and rowed in the boat out to Bank in the evening.

Now a shepherd of Snorri's had been at Oxbrents that day, and saw thence the fight at Swordfirth. So he went home straightway, and told Snorri the Priest how there had been a meeting that day at Swordfirth nowise friendly. So Snorri and his folk took their weapons, and went into the firth nine in company; but when they came there, Steinthor and his men had gone their ways and come aboard off the ice (5) of the firth.

Then Snorri looked to the wounded men, and there was none slain save Freystein Rascal, but they were all nigh wounded to death.

Thorleif Kimbi cried out to Snorri, bidding go after Steinthor and his folk, and let no one of them escape. So Snorri the Priest went there whereas Bergthor had lain, and saw there great gouts of blood. Then he took up in his hand together blood and snow, (6) and crushed it up, and put it in his mouth, and asked who had bled there. And Thorleif said it was Bergthor who had bled. Then Snorri said it was life-blood. "Like enow," said Thorleif; "from a spear it came."

"Methinks," says Snorri, "that is the blood of a doomed man; so we will not follow after them."

Then were Thorbrand's sons brought home to Holyfell and their wounds bound up. Thorod Thorbrandson had so great a wound in the back of his neck that he might not hold his head straight; he had on hose-breeches withal, and they were all wet with blood. A home-man of Snorri the Priest was about pulling them off; but when he fell to stripping them he could not get them off. Then he said: "No lie is that concerning you sons of Thorbrand, when folk say ye are showy men, whereas ye wear clothes so tight that they may not come off you."

Thorod said: "Belike thou pullest slovenly." And therewith the home-man set his feet against the bed-stock and pulled with all his might, but yet gat them off none the more.

Then Snorri the Priest went thereto, and felt along his leg, and found a spear stuck through his leg between the hough sinew and the leg bone, that had nailed together the leg and the breeches. Then said Snorri that the thrall was a measureless fool not to have thought of such a thing.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Snorri Thorbrandson was the briskest of those brothers, and he sat at table beside his namesake that evening. Curds and cheese they had to meat, but Snorri noted that his namesake made but little play with the cheese, and asked why he eat so slowly.

Snorri Thorbrandson answered that lambs found it the hardest to eat when they were first gagged.

Then Snorri the Priest drew his hand down his throat, and found an arrow sticking athwart his gullet and the roots of the tongue. Then Snorri the Priest took drawing-tongs and pulled out the arrow, and then Snorri Thorbrandson fell to his meat.

Then Snorri the Priest healed all the sons of Thorbrand. But when Thorod's neck grew together his head sat somewhat drawn backwards on his trunk, and he said that Snorri would heal him into a maimed man. Snorri said that he deemed the head would come straight when the sinews were knit together; but Thorod would have nought but that the wound should be torn open again, and the head set straighter. But all went as Snorri had guessed, and as soon as the sinews were knit together the head came right; yet little might Thord lout ever after. Thorleif Kimbi thenceforth went mostly with wooden leg.

ENDNOTES:

(1) "Now a great deerhound was with Egil," etc. The deerhound meant is a fox-hunting dog, the fox being often called "dyr", in connection with its depredations among the flocks in hard winters. The erne or eagle here was probably supposed to be the "fylgja", fetch, or genius natalis, which went with Thorolf Haltfoot through life, and had not yet quite parted from him, since still he was walking.

(2) "And made fast to the door—post a purse wherein were twelve ounces of silver." For doorpost a closer rendering would be "the door-groove" — hurthar-klofa — for the door must, since it was a door "a klofa", have been one that moved either up and down like a portcullis, or else one that moved sideways in its groove. Both kinds of doors were known in ancient Iceland.

(3) "Steinthor cast a spear over Snorri's folk for his good luck, according to ancient custom." This, no doubt, was an ancient custom, meaning that he who threw the spear, accompanying the throw by a prayer to Odin, devoted his enemies to the god of battle. A good illustration of the custom we have in the case of King Eric the Victorious at the battle of Fyrisfield against Styrbiorn: "That same night went Eric to the temple of Odin, and gave himself to the god that he might grant him victory, and bargained for ten years' respite from death. Many a thing he had sacrificed before, for the outlook on his side was the less hopeful. Shortly afterwards he saw a great man in a slouching hat, who handed to him a reed-rod and bade him shoot it over the host of Styrbiorn, uttering this thereby: 'Odin owns you all!' And when he had shot, it seemed to the king as if a dart was aloft that flew over the host of Styrbiorn; and forthwith Styrbiorn's army was smitten by blindness, and he himself afterwards. Thereupon such portents befell as that an earthslip broke loose from the upper part of the mountain and rushed adown upon the army of Styrbiorn, and all his folk were killed. And when King Harold (of Denmark) saw this, he together with all the Danes took to flight, and straightway gained their sight when they got beyond the range of the flight of the spear." — Fornmannasögur, v. 250, from Flatey book, ii. 72. This seems to be a later development of Odin's own act in the war between his own host, the "Aesir", and that of the hostile "Vanir", to which allusion is made in Voluspa, 24, in the words:

"Flung Odin, (i.e. his spear)
into the folk he shot,"

which clearly means that he consecrated his enemies to destruction by hurling his spear over and into their host. Odin's "geirr" = spear plays, in connection with the rite of consecration to death, an extensive part in the old heathen ritual. When he himself hung on the tree, the Vingameithr (a vindga meithi), the windy,

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

wind-swept gallows, he says of himself that he was:

"geiri undathr
ok gefinn Othni,
sjalfr sialfom mer:"

"With gar (spear) wounded
and given to Odin,
Self unto myself."
— Havamal, 138.

And the Ynglinga saga (ch. 10) tells us that when Odin (of history) was nigh to death, he caused himself to be "marked with a spear's point, and therewith he claimed as his own all 'weapon-dead' men." Hence it became a common death-consecration custom in mythic times to mark oneself with a spear (to Odin).

Self-immolation by a spear, as well as the consecration to death of enemies by a shaft thrown over them and into them, accompanied by an invocation, were thus parallel rites instituted by the god of war himself. (4) "But the fair-wrought sword bit not whenas it smote armour," etc. This is a very common experience in Scandinavian weapons, and for the first time heard of in history at the battle of Aquae Sextiae between Marius and the Teutons. The sagas abound in anecdotes about the exceeding desire the Northern warrior evinced, wherever he came, for a good weapon, the simple meaning of which is, that in the North weapon-smiths who understood how to forge tempered or steel laminated weapons were, if not unknown, at least very rare. Gretti's fight in the barrow of Kar for the famous sax, the very name of which designates it as a weapon of Southern make, and Gunnar's fight for his famous bill, are only illustrations of struggle for relief from a general and severely-felt want; and the many stories preserved about the preternatural powers and peculiarities of many pet weapons show what an ideal conception a badly-weaponed but highly warlike people had of the mysterious art of tempering iron. The weapon-thing which we are told in Gretti's saga the Vaerings always held before they went on an expedition, no doubt meant principally examination of the weapons which new Northern arrivals had brought, in order to ascertain if they were as good as those used by the Byzantine soldiery. (5) "Steinthor and his men had gone their ways and and aboard off the ice," read: and come off the ice up at the bottom of the bay — "komnir inn af fjartharisnum". The situation was this: Swordfirth cuts into Thorsness from east to west; between it and Templesteadwick, which cuts from west to east into the ness, is a narrow low neck of land. The Ere-dwellers had drawn their ten-oared out of its stand in Swordfirth, and all the way up to the bottom of it, and then over the neck and on to the ice of Templesteadwick, even to the very edge of it. Then they went from the west again to fetch the outfit of the boat which had been left behind, together with their clothes and heavy weapons, and then rail up against the Thorbrandsons coming from the south and crossing Sword firth in the direction of Holyfell. When Snorri appeared on the field of deed the Ere-dwellers had evidently had time after the close of the battle to gather together what they had come to fetch, and to carry it all, together with the wounded Bergthor, as far as where the ice on Sword firth ceased and the above-mentioned narrow neck began. (6) "Then he took up in his hand together blood and snow," etc. This is the only instance we know of blood being tasted in order to ascertain whether it be vital blood or not. Snorri declares it to be "hol-bloth", blood from the hollow or abdominal part of the body, "life-blood", for Bergthor was struck in the "middle". That would then mean black blood, which had not come in contact with the air in the lungs. Medical men assure us that there is no difference in taste between the black and red blood. Snorri knew probably that the man was mortally wounded, and on the strength of that knowledge gave out his declaration.

Chapter 46. The Peace-Making After These Battles.

Now when Steinthor of Ere and his men came to the boatstand at Bank, there they put up their craft, and the brothers went home to their steading, and the body of Bergthor was covered over with a tilt for the night. It is told that goodwife Thorgerd would not go to bed that night to Thormod her husband. But even therewith a man came up from the boatstand and told how Bergthor was dead; and when that was known she went to bed,

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

nor is it said that any quarrel fell out betwixt them afterwards.

Steinthor went home to Ere in the morning, and no more fighting there was thenceforth through the winter. But in the spring, whenas time wore on to the days of summoning, men of good will bethought them that things had got to a sad plight, inasmuch as those men were unappeased and at strife together, who were the greatest in the countryside. So the best men who were friends of either side so brought it about that it came to seeking for peace betwixt them. And Vermund the Slender was chief of these, and with him were many men of good will, such as were allied to one side or the other, and thereof it came afterwards that truce was settled and they were brought to peace, and most men tell that these cases fell under Vermund's dooming; but he gave forth the award at the Thorsness Thing, and had with him the wisest men who were come there.

Now it is told of the peace-making that the slayings of men and onslaughts on either side were set off one against the other. The wound of Thord Wall-eye at Swanfirth was set against the wound of Thorod, son of Snorri the Priest. Against the wound of Mar Hallwardson and the stroke that Steinthor fetched at Snorri the Priest, were set the slayings of three men who fell in Swanfirth. The manslaughters which Stir made in either band were equalled; but in Swordfirth the slaughter of Bergthor and the wounds of Thorbrand's sons were set one against the other. But the slaying of Freystein Rascal met the death of one of those unnamed above who fell in Swanfirth out of Steinthor's company. Thorleif Kimbi had atonement for his lost leg; but the man who died out of Snorri's company in Swanfirth was set against the onset wherewith Thorleif Kimbi had set the fight agoing there.

Then were the wounds of other men set against each other, and what was deemed to be left over was booted for duly, and so men parted from the Thing appeased.

And that peace was well holden while Steinthor and Snorri were both alive.

Chapter 47. Of Thorod Scat-Catcher And Snorri And Biorn The Champion Of The Broad-Wickers.

That same summer Thorod Scat-catcher bade Snorri his brother-in-law to a homefeast at Frodis-water, and Snorri went thither with eight men; but while Snorri was at the feast, Thorod complained to him that he deemed he had both shame and grief from the goings of Biorn Asbrandson, wherein he went to see his wife Thurid, the sister of Snorri the Priest, and said that it was Snorri's part to find rede for that trouble. So Snorri was at the feast certain nights, and Thorod led him away with seemly gifts. Snorri rode over the heath thence, and gave out that he would ride to the ship in Lavahavenmouth; and that was in summer at the time of mowing in the home-field. Now when he came south unto Combheath, then said Snorri: "Now shall we ride down from the heath unto Comb; and I will have you to know," says he, "that I will make an onset on Biorn, and take his life if occasion may serve; but not set on him in his house, because here are strong houses, and Biorn is brave and hardy, and we have but little strength. But hard have such great men as he is been to win in their houses, even when they were set on with more men; (1) as the case of Geir the Priest and Gizur the White shows well enow; for with eighty men they fell on Gunnar of Lithend in his house when he was all alone, and some were hurt, and some slain, and they must needs draw off till Geir the Priest by his cunning found that Gunnar's shot was spent. Now, therefore," says he, "if Biorn is without, as is like, since the day is dry and good, I will that thou, kinsman Mar, fall to work on Biorn, but take heed of this first, that he is no mannikin, and therefore a greedy wolf will have a gripe, whereas he is, if he get not such a wound at the first onset as will speedily work his bane."

So when they rode down from the heath to the stead, they saw that Biorn was without in the home-mead working on a wain, and no man by him, and without weapons, save a little axe and a big whittle, with which he was widening the mortices of the wain; the whittle was a span long from the haft down.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Now Biorn saw how Snorri the Priest and his men rode down from the heath on to the mead, and straightway knew the men. Snorri the Priest was in a blue cape and rode first.

Such hasty rede took Biorn that he caught up the knife and turned swiftly to meet them, and when he came up to Snorri he caught hold of the sleeve of his cape with one hand, and held the knife in the other, in such wise as it was handiest to thrust it into Snorri's breast if need should be.

So Biorn hailed them when they met, and Snorri took his greeting; but Mar let his hands fall, because he deemed that Biorn looked like to do Snorri a mischief speedily if aught were done to break the peace against him.

Then Biorn turned on the road with Snorri and his folk, and asked for the common tidings; and still kept the hold he had got at the first. Then he fell to speech: "So it is, goodman Snorri, that I will not hide that I have played such a game with thee that ye may well hold me guilty, and it is told me that thy mind is heavy against me. Now best it is to my mind," says he, "if ye have any errand with me other than folk who go their ways hereby, that ye now show it forth; but if that be not so, then will I that ye say yea to my asking for truce, and then will I turn back, because I will not be led about like a fool."

"So lucky a hold thou hast of me in this our meeting," says Snorri, "that truce must thou have as at this time, whatever my mind was erst; but this I pray thee, that thou keep thyself henceforth from the beguiling of Thurid, for the wound betwixt us will not be healed if thou abidest as thou hast begun therein."

Biorn answered: "That only will I promise thee which lies in my might; nor do I wot if I have might enow for this, if Thurid and I are in one country together."

Snorri answered: "Nought holds thee here so much as that thou may'st not well take up thine abode away from this countryside."

Biorn answers: "True it is, even as thou say'st, and so shall it be, since thou thyself hast come to meet me thus; and whereas our meeting has gone in such wise, I will promise thee that thou and Thorod shall have no more grief of heart from the meetings of me and Thurid for the next winters."

"Then doest thou well," saith Snorri.

Therewithal they parted, and Snorri rode to the ship and then home to Holyfell. Next day Biorn rode south to the ship at Lavahaven, and took a berth for himself there that summer. Somewhat late ready were they, and they fell in with a northeaster, which prevailed long that summer, (2) and nought was heard of that ship for long after.

Chapter 48. Of Thorbrand's Sons In Greenland.

After the peace between the men of Ere and the Swanfirthers, Thorbrand's sons Snorri and Thorleif went out to Greenland. After Thorleif is called Kimbi's Bay in Greenland, betwixt the jokuls. So Thorleif lived to be old in Greenland, but Snorri went to Vineland the Good with Karlsefni, and in battle with the Skraelings in Vineland there fell Snorri Thorbrandson, (3) the bravest of men.

Thorod Thorbrandson abode behind in Swanfirth, and had to wife Ragnhild, daughter of Thord, son of Thorgils the Eagle, who was the son of Hallstein, the Priest of Hallstein-ness, the thrall-owner.

Chapter 49. Of The Coming Of Christ's Faith To Iceland.

Next it befell that Gizur the White and Hiallti his son-in-law came out to preach Christ's law; (4) and all men in Iceland were christened, and the Christian faith was made law at the Althing. And Snorri the Priest brought it chiefly about with the Westfirthers that Christ's faith was taken of them; and as soon as the Thing was over, Snorri let build a church at Holyfell, and Stir, his father-in-law, another at Under-the-Lava. Now this whetted men much to the building of churches, (5) that it was promised them by the teachers, that a man should have welcome place for so many men in the kingdom of Heaven as might stand in any church that he let build. Thorod Scat-catcher withal let make a church at his homestead of Frodis-water, but priests could not be got for the serving at the churches, though they were built, for in those days but few mass-priests there were in Iceland.

Chapter 50. Of Thorgunna, And How She Came To Frodis-Water.

The same summer that Christ's faith was made law in Iceland, a ship came from over the sea to Snowfell-ness, a keel of Dublin, whose folk were Erse and South-islanders, and a few Northmen. They lay off the Reef long through the summer, biding a wind to sail in over the firth to Daymeal-ness; so many men of the Ness went to chaffer with them. Now among her folk was a South-island woman named Thorgunna, and of her the shipmen told that she had such things among her faring-goods that the like of them would be hard to get in Iceland; but when Thurid the goodwife of Frodis-water heard thereof, she became exceeding wishful to see those fair things, for she was very fain of glitter and show. So she fared to the ship and found Thorgunna, and asked her if she had any woman's attire, something out of the common way. She said that she had no goods for sale, but let out that she had certain fair things, which she might show without shame at feasts or other meetings of men. Thurid prayed to see her fair things, and she granted it to her; and the wares seemed good to Thurid, and exceeding well shaped, but not beyond price.

Thurid offered to deal for the goods, but Thorgunna would not sell them, so Thurid bade her come dwell with her, for she knew that Thorgunna was rich of raiment, and thought to get the goods at her leisure.

Thorgunna answered: "I have good will to go dwell with thee, but I give you to know that I am loth to pay much for myself, because I am exceeding handy at work, and willing enough thereto; but no wet work will I do; and I myself too shall rule what I am to pay for myself from the wealth that I have."

So Thorgunna talked it all over unyieldingly enough, but Thurid would that she should go thither none the less, and her goods were borne from the ship: a great locked ark and a light chest, and they were brought to the house at Frodis-water.

So when Thorgunna came there she prayed to have a bed, and a berth was given to her in the inward part of the hall. There she unlocked her ark, and drew thereout bed-clothes all excellently wrought.

She covered over the bed with English sheets and a silken quilt, and took from the ark bed-curtains and all other bed-gear withal; and so good an array that was, that men deemed that of such goods they had never seen the like.

Then said goodwife Thurid: "Put a price for me on thy bed-gear."

But Thorgunna answered: "Nay, I will not lie in straw for thee, courteous though thou be, and grand of array."

That^a misliked the goodwife, and never after did she bid for the goods.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Thorgunna worked at the weaving day by day when no haymaking was, but when it was dry she worked at the saving of hay in the home-mead, and let make for herself a rake, which she alone must handle.

Thorgunna was a woman great of growth, thick and tall, and right full of flesh; dark-browed and narrow-eyed; her hair dark-red and plenteous; of exceeding good manners was she in her daily ways, and she went every day to church before she went about her work; yet not easy of temper was she, or of many words in her daily conversation. Most men deemed that Thorgunna must have come into her sixth ten of years, yet was she the halest of women.

In those days was Thorir Wooden-leg come to be harboured at Frodis-water, and Thorgrima Witchface his wife with him, and things went somewhat ill betwixt her and Thorgunna. Kiartan the goodman's son was the one with whom Thorgunna would have most dealings, and she loved him much, yet was he cold to her, wherefore she was often cross-grained of mood. Kiartan was by then of thirteen or fourteen winters, and was both great of growth, and noble to look on.

ENDNOTES:

- (1) "But hard have such great men as those been to win in their houses, even when they were set on with more men," etc. Snorri's wary harangue to his following seems to be thrown in here solely in order to give a telling touch to Snorri's unwarriorlike character. This journey of Snorri's befell in 998, but the onset on and slaughter of Gunnar of Lithend took place 990.
- (2) "They fell in with a north-easter which prevailed long that summer.": This notice prepares the story told in ch. lxiv. of Gudleif's meeting with Biorn in America.
- (3) "Snorri Thorbrandson", read "Thorbrand, son of Snorri".
- (4) "Next it befell that Gizur the White and Hiallti his son-in-law came out to preach Christ's law." Hiallti was married to Vilborg, the daughter of Gizur (Landnama i. ch. 21, p. 63).
- (5) "Now this whetted men much to the building of churches," etc. This is a telling instance showing how the preachers of the new faith accommodated themselves to heathen traditions for the purpose of winning the ruling and wealthiest class over to the Church. The brave heathen leader of war-hosts was welcomed by Odin in Valhall, together with his faithful followers fallen in battle with him. The Christian chief is assured of a similar reception in the Kingdom of Heaven for himself and as many as his church will hold!

Chapter 51. It Rains Blood At Frodis-Water. Of Thorgunna, And How She Died And Was Buried At Skalaholt.

The summer was something wet, but nigh autumn befell good drying weather, and the haymaking at Frodis-water was by then come so far that all the home-mead was mown, and nigh half thereof was fully dry. Then befell a good drying day, calm and clear, so that no cloud was seen in the heavens.

Goodman Thorod got up early in the morning and set folk awork, and some fell to carrying the hay, while others ricked it. But Thorod set the women to spreading it, and the work was shared betwixt them, and Thorgunna set to work at as much as a neat's winter-fodder. (1)

So the work went on well the day long, but when it had well-nigh worn three hours from noon, a black cloud-fleck came across the heaven from the north above Skor, and swiftly drew over the heavens, and thitherward straight over the stead. Folk deemed they saw rain in that cloud, and Thorod bade men rake up

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

the hay. But Thorgunna brought hers into ridges, nor would she fall to rake it up though she were so bidden.

The cloud-fleck came up swiftly, and when it stood over the homestead of Frodis-water, there followed therewith so great a darkness, that men might not see out of the home-field, or scarce their hands before them. Then fell so great a rain from the cloud that all the hay that was spread was wetted; but the cloud drew off swiftly and the weather cleared. Then men saw that it had rained blood in that shower. But that evening good drying weather set in again, and the blood dried off all the hay but that which Thorgunna had spread; that dried not, or the rake either which she had handled. Thurid asked Thorgunna what she thought that wonder might forbode. She said that she wotted not. "But that seems to me most like," says she, "that it will be the weird of some one of those that are here."

Thorgunna went home in the evening and into her berth, and put off her bloodied clothes, and then lay down in her bed and sighed heavily, and men deemed that she had fallen sick.

Now that shower had come nowhere else but to Frodis-water.

But Thorgunna might eat no meat that evening, but in the morning goodman Thorod came to her and asked her what end she looked to have of her ailing. She said that she was minded to think that she would not fall sick again.

Then she said: "I deem thee the wisest man of the homestead, therefore will I tell thee all my will as to what I would have made of the goods I leave behind me and of myself. For things will go," says she, "even as I say, though ye think there is little to be noted in me, and I deem it will avail but little to turn away from my behests; for things have begun in such wise, that to no narrow ends deem I they will come, if strong stays be not raised thereagainst."

Thorod answered and said: "Methinks there is no little likelihood that thou wilt have deemed aright about this; yet I will promise thee," says he, "to turn not from thy behests."

Then said Thorgunna: "This would I have done: I would be borne to Skalaholt if I die of this sickness, (2) because my mind tells me that that stead will be for one while the most worshipped stead in the land; and I wot also," says she, "that there will be priests to do the singing over me; so I pray thee to bring me there, and of my goods shalt thou have so much as that thou wilt have no loss thereby; but from my undivided goods shall Thurid have the scarlet cloak that I own; and this I do to the end that she may be content that I see to my other goods in such wise as I will; but I will that thou take for the cost thou hast for me that which thou wilt, or that pleases her, from such things alone as I leave thereto. A gold ring I have which shall go to church with me, but I will that my bed and my bed-hangings be burned up with fire, for that they will be of no good to any man; and I say this not because I grudge anyone to enjoy those good things, if I knew that they would be of good avail to any; but now I say so much thereover," says she, "because I deem it ill that folk should have so much heavy trouble from me, as well I wot will be, if ye turn away from that which I now ordain."

Thorod promised to do after her bidding; and so the sickness grew on her after that, and Thorgunna lay there not many days before she died.

The corpse was first borne into the church there, and Thorod let make a chest for the corpse, and the next day he had the bed-gear borne out into the air, and brought faggots together, and let pile up a bonfire there beside. Then goodwife Thurid went to him and asked what he was minded to do with the bed-gear. He said that he would burn it up with fire, even as Thorgunna had charged.

She answered: "It mislikes me that such precious things should be burned."

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Thorod said: "She spake much thereon, and how it would not do to turn aside from that she had laid down."

Thurid said: "Such words were of nought but her envious mind; she grudged that any should enjoy these, therefore did she lay such charge on thee; but nought ill-omened will come of it, in whatsoever way such things are departed from."

"I know not," said he, "that things will go well but if we do as she has bidden."

Then Thurid put her arms round his neck, and prayed him not to burn the bed-gear, and pressed him so eagerly that he changed his mind and she brought matters about in such wise that Thorod burned the bolster and the mattress, but she took to her the quilt and sheets, and all the hangings; and yet withal it misliked them both.

Thereafter was the burial journey got ready, and trusty men got to go with the corpse, and good horses that Thorod owned. The body was swathed in linen, but not sewn up, and then laid in the chest. So then they went south over the heath as the road lies, and nought is told of their journey till they came south past Valbiorns-vales. There they got amongst flows exceeding soft, and the corpse was often upset. Then they went south to Northwater, and crossed it by Isleford. Deep was the river, and a storm befell with much rain; but they came at last to a stead that was within Staffholts-tongue and is called Nether-ness, and there asked for guesting, but the bonder would give them no cheer; so whereas the night was at hand, they deemed they might go no further, for belike it was nought easy to deal with Whitewater by night; so they unloaded their horses, and bore the corpse into a house over against the outer door, and then went into the hall and did off their clothes, and deemed they would abide there unfed that night. But the home-men went to bed by daylight, and when they were abed, they heard a great clatter in the buttery, and so they went to see what was toward, if perchance thieves had not broken in there, and when they came to the buttery there was to behold a tall woman, naked, with nothing on her, busied at bringing out victuals. So when they saw her, they were so afeard they durst go nowhere anigh.

But when the corpse-bearers knew thereof they went there, and saw what was toward, that thither was Thorgunna come, and good it seemed to all not to meddle with her. So when she had wrought such things there as she would, she bore meat into the hall, and laid the table and set out meat thereon. Then spake the corpse-bearers to the bonder: "Maybe things will end so or ever we part that thou wilt deem that thou hast paid dear enough for not giving us any cheer."

Then said the goodman and goodwife: "We will surely give you meat, and do for you all other things that ye may need."

And forthwith, when the goodman had bidden them good cheer, Thorgunna went out of the hall and out adoors, and was not seen after. And after that, light was brought into the hall, and the wet clothes pulled off from the guests and dry clothes got them in their stead, and they went to table and crossed the meat, while the goodman had all the house besprinkled with holy water.

So the guests eat the meat, and none had harm therefrom, though Thorgunna had set it out.

There they slept through the night, and were in a most hospitable place belike; but in the morning they got them ready for their journey, and right well it sped with them; but wheresoever these haps were known, there it seemed best rede to most folk to give them all the cheer they stood in need of.

So after this nought befell to tell of in their journey. And when they came to Skalaholt, the good things were yielded up which Thorgunna had given thereto, and the priests took them, corpse and all, gladly enow, and there was Thorgunna laid in earth, but the corpse-bearers fared home, and all went well with their journey,

and they all came home in good case.

Chapter 52. The Beginning Of Wonders At Frodis-Water.

At Frodis-water was there a great fire-hall, and lock-beds in therefrom, as the wont then was. Out from the hall there were two butteries, one on either hand, with stock-fish stored in one, and meal in the other. There were meal-fires made every evening in the fire-hall, as the wont was, and men mostly sat thereby or ever they went to meat.

Now that same night that the corpse-bearers came home, as men sat by the meal-fires at Frodiswater, they saw how by the panelling of the house-wall was come a half-moon, and all might see it who were in the house; and it went backward and withershins round about the house, nor did it vanish away while folk sat by the fires. So Thorod asked Thorir Wooden-leg what that might bode.

Thorir said it was the Moon of Weird, (3) "and the deaths of men will follow thereafter," says he.

So a whole week this thing endured, that the Moon of Weird came in there evening after evening.

Chapter 53. Now Men Die At Frodis-Water, More Wonders.

This happed next to tell of at Frodis-water, that the shepherd came in exceeding hushed. Little he said, and what he said was peevish; so men deemed it most like that he was bewitched, for he fared in distraught wise, and was ever talking to himself; and so things went on awhile.

But when two weeks of winter were worn, the shepherd came home on a night, and went straight to his bed and lay down, and in the morning when men came to him he was dead. So he was buried at the church there.

A little after that great hauntings befell; and on a night as Thorir Wooden-leg went out for his needs, and turned off aside from the door, when he would go in again, he saw how the shepherd was come before the door. Then would he go in again, but the shepherd would nowise have it so; and Thorir was fain to get away, but the shepherd went at him, and got hold of him, and cast him homeward up against the door. At this he was affrighted exceedingly; yet he got him to his bed, and he was by then grown coal-blue all over.

Now from this he fell sick and died, and was buried there at the church; but ever after were the twain, the shepherd and Thorir Wooden-leg, seen in company, and therefrom were folk full of dread, as was like to be.

After Thorir's death a house-carle of Thorod fell sick, and lay there three nights or ever he died. Then one after another died, till six were dead; and by then it was hard on the Yule-fast, though at that time there was no fasting in Iceland.

Now the pile of stock-fish was so heaped up in the buttery that it filled it up, so that the door might not be opened, and it went right up to the tie-beam, and a ladder was needed to get the stock-fish from the top.

So one evening when men sat by the meal-fires, they heard how the stock-fish was being riven out of its skin, but when men looked thereto, they found there nought quick. But in the winter a little before Yule, goodman Thorod went out to Ness after his stock-fish. They were six together in a ten-oarer, and were out there night-long.

The same evening that Thorod went from home, it fell out at Frodis-water, when the meal-fires were lighted and men came gathering into the hall, that they saw how a seal's head came up through the floor of the

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

fire-hall. A certain home-woman came forth first and saw that hap, and caught up a club that lay in the doorway, and drave it at the seal's head; but it rose up under the blow, and glared up at Thorgunna's bed-gear.

Then went a house-carle thereto, and beat on the seal, but at every blow it kept rising till it was up as far as below the flappers. Then fell the house-carle swooning, and all that were thereby were fulfilled of mighty dread.

Then the swain Kiartan ran thereto, and took up a great sledge-hammer and smote on the seal's head, and great was that blow, but the seal only shook its head and looked round about; but Kiartan smote one blow on another till the seal sank down therewith, as if he were at the knocking down of a peg; but he smote on till the seal went down so far that he might beat down the floor over the head of him. And so indeed it fell out the winter through, that all the portents dreaded Kiartan the most of all.

Chapter 54. The Death Of Thorod Scat-Catcher; The Dead Walk At Frodis-Water.

The morning that Thorod and his men went out westaway from Ness, they were all lost off Enni; the ship and the fish drave ashore there under Enni, but the corpses were not found. But when this news was known at Frodiswater, Kiartan and Thurid bade their neighbours to the arvale, and their Yule ale was taken and used for the arvale. But the first evening whenas men were at the feast, and were come to their seats, in came goodman Thorod and his fellows into the hall, all of them dripping wet. Men gave good welcome to Thorod, for a good portent was it deemed, since folk held it for sooth that those men should have good cheer of Ran if they, who had been drowned at sea, came to their own burial-ale; for in those days little of the olden lore was cast aside, though men were baptized and were Christian by name.

Now Thorod and his company went down the endlong sitting-hall, which was double-doored, and went into the fire-hall, and took no man's greeting, and set them down by the fire. Then the homemen fled away from the fire-hall, but Thorod and his folk sat behind there till the fires slaked, and then gat them gone. And thus it befell every evening while the arvale lasted, that they came to the fire. Much talk was hereover at the arvale, and some guessed that it would leave off when the feast was over. The guests went home after the feast, and somewhat dreary was that household left.

Now the evening that the guests went away were the meal-fires made as wont was. But when they burned up, in came Thorod and his company all dripping wet, and they sat down by the fire and fell to wringing their raiment. And so when they were sat down, in came Thorir Wooden-leg and his six followers, and they were all be-moulded, and they shook their raiment and cast the mould at Thorod and his folk.

Then the home-men fled away from the fire-hall, as might be looked for, and had neither light nor warm stones nor any matter wherewith they had any avail of the fire.

But the evening next after were fires made in another chamber, and it was deemed that they would be less likely to come thither, but it fell not out so, and all went in the same way as the night before, and both companies came to the fires. The third evening Kiartan gave counsel to make a long fire in the fire-hall, and meal-fires in another chamber. So was it done, and this availed thus much, that Thorod and his folk sat by the long fire and the home-men by the little fire; and so things went till over Yuletide.

Now it befell that more and more were things going on in the stock-fish heap, and night and day men might hear how the stock-fish was torn. And after this the time came when need was of stock-fish, and men went to search the heap; and the man who went up thereon saw this to tell of, that up from the heap came a great

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

tail as big as a singed neat's tail, and it was short-haired and seal-haired; he who went up on to the heap caught at the tail and tugged, and called on other men to come help, him. So folk fared up on to the heap, both men and women, and tugged at the tail, and got nought done, and they thought none otherwise than that the tail was dead; but lo, as they pulled, the tail drew down through their hands, so that the skin came off the palms of those who had the firmest hold thereon, and nought was known afterwards of that tail.

Then was the stock-fish heap taken down, and every fish therein was found torn from the skin, so that there was no fish found in his skin in the lower part of the heap; but nought quick was found therein.

After these haps Thorgrima Witch-face, the wife of Thorir Wooden-leg, fell sick and lay but a little while or she died, and the very same evening that she was buried, she was seen in the company of Thorir her husband. Then the sickness fell on folk anew after the tail was seen, and more women than men died; and yet six men died in that brunt. But some fled before those hauntings and ghosts. At harvest-tide there had been thirty serving-folk there, but eighteen were dead, and five fled away, and but seven were left behind at Goi.

Chapter 55. A Door-Doom At Frodis-Water.

Now when those wonders had gone so far, one day Kiartan went east unto Holyfell to go see Snorri the Priest, his mother's brother, and asked rede of him what he should do in the matter of those wonders that had fallen on them. At that time was come to Holyfell the priest that Gizur the White had sent to Snorri the Priest. So Snorri sent the priest out to Frodis-water with Kiartan, as well as his son Thord Kausi, and six men more. Thereto he added the counsel to burn Thorgunna's bed-gear, and summon all those who walked, to a door-doom; and he bade the priest sing the hours there, and hallow water and shrive all folk. So these summoned men from the nighest steads on the road, and came to Frodis-water on the eve of Candlemas at such time as the meal-fires were lighted.

By then had goodwife Thurid fallen sick even in such wise as those who had died.

Now Kiartan went in straightway and saw how Thorod and his folk sat by the fire as their wont was. So he took down Thorgunna's bed-gear, and went into the fire-hall, and caught up brands from the fire, and went out therewith, and then was all the bed-array burned that Thorgunna had owned.

Thereafter Kiartan summoned Thorir Woodenleg, and Thord Kausi summoned goodman Thorod, in that they went about that household without leave, and despoiled men both of life and luck; all were summoned who sat by the fires.

Then was a door-doom named, and these cases put forward; and it was done in all matters even as at a doom of the Thing: verdicts were delivered, cases summed up, and doom given.

But as soon as the sentence on Thorir Woodenleg was given out, he arose and said: "Here have I sat while sit I might;" and thereafter he went out by the door before which the court was not set.

Then was the sentence on the shepherd passed. But when he heard it he stood up and said: "Go I now hencefrom; I ween erst it had more seemly been."

And when Thorgrima Witch-face heard the doom on her ended, she also arose and said: "Here while abiding was meet I abode."

Then they charged one after the other, and each arose as the sentence fell on him, and all said somewhat at their going forth; but ever it seemed by the words of each that they were all loth to depart. At last was judgment given on goodman Thorod, and when he heard it he stood up and said: "Meseems little peace is

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

here; so get us all gone elsewhere ;" and therewith he went out.

Then in walked Kiartan and his folk, and the priest bare hallowed water and the holy things throughout the house, and on the next day they sang all the hours and mass with great solemnity, and so there was an end thereafter to all walkings and hauntings at Frodis-water. But Thurid got better of her sickness so that she was healed.

In the spring after these wonders Kiartan took to him serving- folk, and dwelt long after at Frodis-water, and was the greatest of the doughty.

ENDNOTES:

(1) "Thorgunna (was) set to work at as much as a neat's winter-fodder" — "nauts-fothr". Here, apparently, "nauts-fothr" means the same as the more common term, "kyr-fothr", the amount of hay deemed sufficient to feed a cow through the winter, from the time she goes "off" grass in autumn, till the time she is turned on to pasture in spring. There can be no doubt that it must in the old days have amounted to very much the same as at present, namely, about thirty horse-loads, each of which should weigh about 240 lbs.

(2) "I would be borne to Skalaholt if I die of this sickness," etc. At this time dwelt at Skalaholt Gizur the White, according to some records at least (Hungrvaka, ch. ii., Saga Olafs Tryggvasonar, Fornm. s. ch. 216); but according to others, he lived at Mossfell as late as 1012 (Njala, ch. 135), and was the first man that built a house at Skalaholt, which Kristni Saga (ch. 12) clearly indicates to have taken place some years after Christianity was made law in Iceland. Both these latter records are older than the two former. Thorgunna's prophecy concerning the worship the place would be held in refers to its being made the see of the bishop of Iceland, which did not come about till fifty-six years after the date at which our saga supposes her death to have occurred (1000), technically even a good deal later.

(3) The description given of the moon of Weird — "urthar-mani" — indeed, the mention of this portent, is only found here, and no allusion to it exists elsewhere in the literature, that we are aware of. "Urthr", gen. "urthar", was one of the three northern fates, the others being Verthandi and Skuld, which names clearly indicate the Past, Present, and Future. Weird's moon would seem generally to have been taken as a portent that betokened an act that Fate had already accomplished, while here it seems to be Urd's notice of what she had decided should come to pass within Verthandi's and Skuld's domain, namely, the troubles, such as sickness, which were to fall on the people of Frodis-water (Verthandi's business), and death thereon following (Skuld's affair).

Chapter 56. Of Snorri The Priest And The Blood-Suit After Stir.

Snorri the Priest dwelt at Holyfell eight winters after Christ's faith was made law in Iceland. The last winter he dwelt there was the one wherein his father-in-law Stir was slain at Iorvi in Flisa-wharf. Then Snorri the Priest went south thither after the corpse; and he went against Stir in the women's bower at Horseholt, whenas he was sitting upright and was holding the bonder's daughter by the middle.

That spring Snorri changed lands with Gudrun Osvif's daughter, and brought his household to Tongue in Saelings-dale; that was two winters after the slaying of Bolli Thorleikson, Gudrun's husband.

The same spring Snorri went south to Burgfirth with four hundred men to follow up the suit for the slaying of Stir. In his company was Vermund the Slender, the brother of Stir, who dwelt as then at Waterfirth; Steinthor of Ere withal, and Thorod Thorbrandson of Swanfirth; Thorleik Brandson of Crossness, the brother's son of Stir, also, and many other men of worth.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

The furthest south they came was to Whitewater at Howeford over against By. There they found before them, south of the river, Illugi the Black, Kleppiarn the Old, Thorstein Gislison, Gunnlaug the Wormtongue, Thorstein Thorgilson of Hafsfirthisle, who had to wife Vigdis, the daughter of Illugi the Black; and many other men of account were there, with a band of more than five hundred men.

So Snorri the Priest and his folk might nowise ride south over the river, but set forth the suit when they had gone the furthest they might without risk, and Snorri summoned Guest for the slaying of Stir.

But this same suit Thorstein Gislison brought to nought for Snorri the Priest in the summer at the Althing.

The same summer Snorri the Priest rode south to Burgfirth, and took the life of Thorstein Gislison and Gunnar his son; and still was Steinthor of Ere with him, and Thorod Thorbrandson, and

Brand Hoskuldson, (1) and Thorleik Brandson, and they were fifteen in all.

The next spring they met at the Thing of Thorsness, Snorri the Priest to wit, and Thorstein of Hafsfirthisle, the son-in-law of Illugi the Black. Thorstein was the son of Thorgils, (2) the son of Thorfinn, the son of Seal-Thorir of Redmel, but his mother was Aud, the daughter of Alf-a-dales; but Thorstein was the cousin of Thorgils Arison of Reek-knolls, and Thorgeir Havarson, and Thorgils Hallason, and Bitter-Oddi, and those Swanfirthers, Thorleif Kimbi and the other sons of Thorbrand.

Thorstein had at that time set on foot many cases for the Thorsness Thing. So one day on the Thing-brent, Snorri the Priest asked if Thorstein had set on foot many suits for the Thing. Thorstein answered that he had set on foot certain ones.

Then said Snorri: "Now belike wilt thou that we further thy cases for thee, even as ye Burgrifthers furthered ours last spring."

Thorstein said: "I nowise long for this."

But when Snorri had so spoken, his sons and many other kinsmen of Stir laid heavy words thereto, and said that it would serve Thorstein right well, if every one of his suits there should come to an end as it now stood, and said it was right meet that he himself should now pay for that shame which he and Illugi his father-in-law had done to them the past summer.

Thorstein answered few words thereto, and men went therewith from the Thing-brent. However, Thorstein and his kin, the men of Redmel, had brought together a great company, and when men should go to the courts, Thorstein got ready to push forward all these suits of his which he had set on foot for the courts to adjudge. But when the kin of Stir and folk allied to him knew that, they armed themselves, and went betwixt the courts, and the Redmel-folk as they would go to the courts, and a fight befell betwixt them.

Thorstein of Hafsfirthisle would pay no heed to aught but making for the place whereas Snorri the Priest was. Both big and stark was Thorstein, and a deft man-at-arms, but when he fell fiercely on Snorri, Kiartan of Frodis-water, Snorri's sister's son, ran before him, and Thorstein and he fought long together, and their weapon-play was exceeding hard-fought.

But thereafter friends of both sides came thither, and went between them, and brought about truce.

After the battle spake Snorri to Kiartan his kinsman, and said: "Well wentest thou forth today, Broadwicking!"

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Kiartan answered somewhat wrathfully: "No need to throw my kin in my teeth," said he. In this fight fell seven of Thorstein's men, but many were wounded on either side.

These matters were settled straightly at the Thing, and Snorri the Priest was the more generous in all peace-makings, because he would not that these matters should come to the Althing, whereas the slaughter of Thorstein Gislison was yet unatoned for; and it seemed to him that he would have full enough to answer to at the Althing, though this were not brought against him. About all these things, the slaying of Thorstein Gislison, and Gunnar his son, and also about the battle at the Thorsness Thing, thus sings Thorrood Trefilson in the Raven-song:

"Again now the great-heart,
The Rhine-fires waster,
Slew two men in spear-storm
South over the water.
Thereafter lay seven
Life-bereft on the Ness
Of the bane of the troll-wives.
Thereof are there tokens."

Such settlement of peace was struck, that Thorstein should freely forward all the cases at the Thorsness Thing which he had laid thither. But in the summer at the Althing was peace made for the slaying of Thorstein Gislison and Gunnar his son.

All who had been at the slaying with Snorri the Priest got them gone abroad out of the land.

That summer Thorstein of Hafsfirthisle took the Priesthood of the Redmel-folk out of the Thorsness Thing, because it seemed to him he had waned in might there before the folk of Snorri. So these kinsmen set up a Thing in Streamfirth, and held it for long after.

Chapter 57. Of Uspak Of Ere In Bitter, And Of His Injustice.

Whenas Snorri the Priest had dwelt a few winters at Saelings-dale-Tongue, there dwelt a man at Ere in Bitter called Uspak. He was a married man, and had a son called Glum, who was young in those days. Uspak was the son of Kiallak of Kiallak's-river of Skridinsenni. Uspak was the biggest and strongest of men; he was unloved and the most unjust of men, and had with him seven or eight carles who were much in the way of picking quarrels with men in those northern parts; they had ever a ship off the land, and took from every man his goods and his drifts as it seemed them good.

A man called Alf the Little dwelt at Thambardale (3) in Bitter. He had wealth enow, and was the greatest of men in his housekeeping; he was a Thingman of Snorri the Priest, and had the ward of his drifts round Gudlaugs-head. Alf, too, deemed himself to feel cold from Uspak and his men, and made plaint thereof to Snorri the Priest whensoever they met.

Thorir, son of Gullhard, dwelt at Tongue in Bitter in those days. He was a friend of Sturla Thiodrekson, (4) who was called Slaying-Sturla, who dwelt at Stead-knoll in Saurby. Thorir was a rich bonder, and a foremost man among those of Bitter, and had withal the wardship of Sturla's drifts there in the north. Full oft was grey silver in the fire betwixt Thorir and Uspak, and now one now the other came off best.

Uspak was the foremost man there about Crosswater-dale and Enni.

One winter the hard weather came on early, and straightway was there earth-ban (5) about Bitter, whereof men had great loss of live-stock; but some drave their beasts south over the heath.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

The summer before had Uspak let build a work at his stead of Ere, a wondrous good fighting-stead, if men were therein for defence.

In the winter at Goi came on a great snowstorm and held on for a week; a great northern gale it was. But when the storm abated, men saw that the ice from the main was come thither all over the outer firth, but no ice was as then come into Bitter, so men went to scan their foreshores.

Now it is to be told, that out betwixt Stika and Gudlaugs-head was a great whale driven ashore; in that whale Snorri the Priest and Sturla Thiodrekson had the greatest share; but Alf the Little and more bonders yet had certain shares in it also. So men from all Bitter go thither and cut up the whale under the ordering of Thorir and Alf.

But as men were at the cutting they saw a craft come rowing from the other side of the firth from Ere, and knew it for a great twelve-oarer that Uspak owned.

Now these landed by the whale and went up there, fifteen men all-armed in company; and when Uspak came aland he went to the whale and asked who had the rule thereover. Thorir said that he was over the share that Sturla had, but Alf over his share and that of Snorri the Priest; and that of the other bonders each saw to his own share. Uspak asked what they would hand over to him of the whale. Thorir answers: "Nought will I give thee of the portion that I deal with; but I wot not but that the bonders will sell thee of that which they own. What wilt thou pay therefor?"

"Thou knowest, Thorir," said Uspak, "that I am not wont to buy whale of you men of Bitter."

"Well," said Thorir, "I am minded to think that thou gettest none without price."

Now such of the whale as was cut lay in a heap, and was not yet apportioned out; so Uspak bid his men go thereto and bear it down to his keel; and those who were at the whale had but few weapons except the axes wherewith they were cutting it up. But when Thorir saw that Uspak and his folk went at the whale, he called out to the men not to let themselves be robbed. Then they ran to the other side of the heap, and those about the uncut whale ran therefrom, and Thorir was the swiftest of them.

Uspak turned to meet him and fetched a blow at him with his axe-hammer, and smote him on the ear so that he fell swooning; but those who were nighest caught hold of him and dragged him to them, and stood over him while he lay in the swoon, but then was the whale not guarded.

Then came up Alf the Little and bade them not take the whale. Uspak answered: "Come not nigh, Alf; thin is thy skull and heavy my axe, and far worse than Thorir shalt thou fare, if thou makest one step further forward."

This wholesome counsel thus taught him Alf followed. Uspak and his folk bore the whale down to their keel, and had got it done or ever Thorir woke up. But when he knew what had betid, he blamed his men that they had done slothfully in standing by him while some were robbed and some beaten; and therewith he sprang up. But Uspak had by then got his keel afloat, and they thrust off from the land. Then they rowed west over the firth to Ere, and Uspak let none go from him who had been in this journey; but there they had their abode and got matters ready in the work.

Thorir and his folk shared the whale, and let the loss of that which was taken fall equally on all, even according to the share which each man owned in the whale, and thereafter all went home.

And now full great enmity there was betwixt Thorir and Uspak, but whereas Uspak had a many men, the booty was soon on the wane.

Chapter 58. Uspak Robs Alf The Little. Thorir Chases Uspak.

Now on a night Uspak and his men went into Thambardale fifteen in company, and set on the house of Alf the Little, and drove him and all his men into the hall while they robbed there, and bore thence four horseloads of goods.

From Firth-horn men had gotten ware of their goings, and therefore was a man sent to Tongue to tell Thorir. Thorir gathered men, and he was eighteen strong, and they went down to the firth-bottom. Then Thorir saw where Uspak and his men had passed him, and went east on the other side of Firth-horn; and when Uspak saw the chase, he said:

"Men are coming after us, and there will Thorir be going," says he; "and now will he be minded to pay me back for my blow wherewith I smote him last winter. They are eighteen, but we fifteen, yet better arrayed. Now it will not be easy to see which of us will be fainest of blows; but those horses which we have taken from Thambardale will be fain of home, yet never will I let that be taken from me which we have laid hands on; so two of us who are the worst armed shall drive the laden horses before us out to Ere, and let those men who are at home come to meet us; but we thirteen will withstand these men even as we may."

So they did as Uspak bade. But when Thorir came up, Uspak greeted him, and asked for tidings, and was soft-spoken, that so he might delay Thorir and his folk. Thorir asked whence they had those goods. Uspak says: "From Thambardale."

"How camest thou thereby?" says Thorir.

Says Uspak: "They were neither given, nor paid, nor sold at a price."

"Will ye let them go, and give them into our hands?" said Thorir.

Uspak said he could not bring himself to that, and therewith they ran each at each, and a fight befell; and Thorir and his men were of the eagerest, but Uspak and his folk defended themselves well and manly, yet some were wounded, and some slain.

Thorir had a bear-bill in his hand, and therewith he ran at Uspak and smote at him, but Uspak put the thrust from him, and whereas Thorir had thrown all his might into the blow, and there was nought before the bill, he fell on his knees and louted forward. Then Uspak smote Thorir on the back with: his axe, and loud rang the stroke; and Uspak said: "That shall stay thy long journeys, Thorir," says he.

"Maybe," says Thorir; "yet methinks a full day's journey may I go for all thee and that stroke of thine."

For Thorir had a chain-knife round his neck, as the fashion then was, and had cast it aback behind him, and the blow had come thereon, and he had but been scratched in the muscles on either side of his spine, and little enough withal.

Then ran up a fellow of Thorir's and smote at Uspak, but he thrust forth his axe, and the blow took the shaft thereof and struck it asunder, and down fell the axe. Then cried out Uspak, and bade his men flee away, and himself fell to running; but as soon as Thorir arose, he cast his bill at Uspak and smote him on the thigh, and cut through it on the outer side of the bone. Uspak drew the bill from the wound and cast it back, and it smote the man in the midst who had erst cut at Uspak, and down he fell dead to the earth.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Thereafter away ran Uspak and his following, and Thorir and his company chased them out along the foreshores well-nigh to Ere. Then came folk from the homestead, both men and women, and Thorir and his folk turned back.

And no more onslaughts were made on either side thenceforth through the winter.

At that meeting fell three of Uspak's men and one of Thorir's, but many were wounded on either side.

Chapter 59. Uspak And His Men At The Strands. They Give Up Their Work.

Snorri the Priest took up all the cases of Alf the Little at the hands of Uspak and his men, and made all those guilty at the Thorsness Thing; and after the Thing he went home to Tongue, and sat at home until the time came for the court of forfeiture to sit; (6) and then he went north to Bitter with a great company. But when he came there, then was Uspak gone with all his; and they had gone north to the Strands fifteen in company, and had five keels. They were at the Strands through the summer, and did there many unpeaceful deeds.

They set them down north in Wrackfirth, and gathered men to them, and thither came he who is called Raven and was bynamed the Viking. (7) He was nought but an ill-doer, and had lain out north about the Strands. There they wrought great warfare with robbing and slaying of men, and held all together till towards winter-nights.

Then gathered together the Strand-men, Olaf Eyvindson, of Drangar, and other bonders with him, and fell on them. They had there a work once more about their stead in Wrackfirth, and were well-nigh thirty in company. Olaf and his folk sat down before the work, and hard to deal with they deemed it to be. So both sides talked together, and the evil-doers offered to get them gone from the Strands, and do no more unpeaceful deeds there henceforth, while the others should depart from before the work; and whereas they deemed it nowise an easy play to have to do with them, they took that choice, and both sides bound themselves by oath to this settlement, and the bonders fared home withal.

Chapter 60. Uspak Goes Back To Ere In Bitter: He Robs And Slays.

Now is it to be told of Snorri the Priest that he went to the court of forfeiture north in Bitter, as is written afore, but when he came to Ere, then was Uspak gone. So Snorri held the court of forfeiture there according to law, and laid hands on all the forfeit goods, and divided them betwixt those men as had had the most ill deeds done them, Alf the Little to wit, and the other men who had had harm from robberies. Thereafter Snorri the Priest rode home to Tongue, and so wore the summer.

Now Uspak and his men went from the Strands about the beginning of winter-nights, and had two big boats. They went in past the Strands, and then south across the bay to Waterness. There they went up and robbed, and loaded both the boats up to the gunwale, and then stretched north away over the bay into Bitter (8) and landed at Ere, and bore their spoil up into the work. There had Uspak's wife and his son Glum abode the summer through, with but two cows. Now on the very same night that they came home, they rowed both the boats down to the firth-bottom, and went up to the farm at Tongue, and broke into the house there, and took goodman Thorir from his bed, and led him out and slew him. Then they robbed all the goods that were stored there within doors, and brought them to the boats, and then rowed to Thambardale, and ran up and brake open the doors there, as at Tongue.

Alf the Little had lain down in his clothes, and when he heard the door broken open, he ran out to the secret door that was at the back of the house, and went out there through and ran up the dale. But Uspak and his folk

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

robbed all they might lay hands upon, and brought it to their boats, and then went home to Ere with both boats laden, and brought both the liftings into the work. They brought the boats into the work withal, and filled them both with water, and then closed the work, and the best of fighting—steads it was. So thereafter they sat there the winter long.

ENDNOTES:

(1) "Brand", read Bard.

(2) "Thorstein was the cousin of", etc. See Genealogies.

(3) Thambardale. We have left the Icelandic form of the first part of this compound uninterfered with, chiefly on the ground of euphony, partly also because of the awkward sense of Thomb. See Dict. Thambar = Thamb-ar = of the river of Thomb. Probably the name was given to the river in consequence of it having caused some accident to a cow or a mare (less likely, a ewe), which bore the name of "Thomb".

(4) For Sturla Thiodrekson's family connections, see Preface to the "Story of Howard the Halt".

(5) "Earth-ban", jarth-bonn, a common term to this day, indicating that all pasture is intercepted by the thickness of the snow on the ground:

(6) (Snorri) "sat at home until the time came for the court of forfeiture to sit" — "sat heima til feransdoms". This court was held fourteen days after judgment had fallen against the accused; or, if the case had been decided against him by award, fourteen days after the next following Althing. As a rule, it was held at the home of the guilty person, but in cases where his proper domicile or district of amenability to justice were uncertain, the court was held at the house of the Gothi who was regarded as being most concerned in the case. The court should be established within an arrow's shot-reach of the enclosure to the homefield, on that side of the same which pointed directly towards the home of the plaintiff, if the circumstances of the locality would allow such spot outside the homefield to be occupied; but it was also provided, that the seat of the court should be chosen where there was "neither acre nor ing" (= mowable meadow). The Gothi, within whose jurisdiction the court was held, should nominate twelve judges for it out of the nearest neighbours, for which nomination it signified nothing whether the neighbours were the Gothi's Thingmen or not. The judges could be challenged by the defendant even as the members of a jury could be. The executor (plaintiff) should summon, three nights or more before the meet of the court, five of the nearest neighbours to deliver all verdicts before it. He should likewise summon thither those who were witnesses to the delivery of the judgment or the award against the accused in the first instance. The creditors of the accused should likewise meet before this court, having summoned thither their witnesses, or, in case they had none such, the proper complement of nearest neighbours. Every creditor was to have what debt he had against the accused paid in full, or, in case his means sufficed not, reduced at a proportionate rate to those of the rest. When all creditors were satisfied, the Gothi was the next first claimant to his share in the remainder of the accused's property; he should have a cow or an ox four years old, or, if so much was not left over, one mark. Of the remainder one half fell to the share of the plaintiff, the other half to that of the men of the Quarter or of the Thing, according as the accused, was condemned at the Althing or the Spring Thing. For the elaborate legislation relating to this court, see especially Gragas, i. a, 83–96.

(7) "Raven was by-named the Viking. He was nought but an evil-doer." "Vikigr" is frequently used as a synonym for evil-doer, thief, and robber. Thus in our own saga we read: "Snorri the Priest and Sturla scattered the vikings", namely, Uspak and his band. So also the term is used of Thorir Thomb and his companions, who elsewhere are described as the worst of robbers and evil-doers ("Grettir's saga", xix). The first settler of the bay of Bitter, Thorbiorn Bitter, is even in "Landnama" said to have been "a viking and a scoundrel" (ii, ch. 32, p. 159). This sense of the word is supposed to be due to degeneracy, by lapse of time,

from something nobler which once upon a time was implied by it. That probably is a mere mistake. The viking's profession, whenever it is mentioned, is chiefly defined as robbery, arson, and manslaughter. Perpetrated on foreigners = natural enemies, it mattered not, especially as it served the end of military distinction at home; exercised on fellow-citizens, living under laws of their own making, its real nature appeared in its true light; hence, from the first, the viking was -- abroad, a hero; at home, a scoundrel.

(8) "And then stretched north away over the bay into Bitter." The bearing from Waterness into Bitter is, as nearly as possible, due west. Our text calls it "north", even as the Waterness people to this day prefer to indicate the point. The reason of this is, that Bitter lies within the bailiwick of the Strands, a district the main part of which lies much farther to the north than Waterness, and thus the bearing of it from that point gives to every locality within it the same designation of the cardinal point.

Chapter 61. Snorri Sends For Thrand The Strider.

Alf the Little ran till he came to Tongue to Snorri the Priest, and told him of his troubles, and egged him on hard to go north against Uspak and his folk. But Snorri the Priest would first hear from the north what more they had done than driving Alf from the north, or whether they meant to have a settled abode there in Bitter. A little after came tidings from Bitter in the north of the slaying of Thorir and the array which Uspak had there, and it was heard tell of men that they would not be easily won.

Then Snorri the Priest let fetch Alf's household and such goods as were left behind, and all those matters came to Tongue and were there the winter long. Snorri's unfriends laid blame on him, in that he was held by folk slow to set Alf's matters right. Snorri let them say what they would about it, and still was nought done.

Now Sturla Thiodrekson sent word from the west (1) that he would straightway get ready to set on Uspak and his company as soon as Snorri would, and said that it was no less due of him than of Snorri to go that journey. The winter wore on till past Yule, and ever were ill deeds of Uspak and his company heard of from the north. The winter was hard, and all the firths were under ice.

But a little before Lent, Snorri the Priest sent out to Ness to Ingiald's-knoll, where dwelt a man called Thrand the Strider, and was the son of that Ingiald by whom the homestead is named at Ingiald's-knoll. Thrand was the biggest and strongest of men, and the swiftest of foot. He had been before with Snorri the Priest, and was said to be not of one shape whiles he was heathen; (2) but the devilhood fell off from most men when they were christened.

Now Snorri sent word to Thrand, bidding him come thither to Tongue to meet him, and to get ready his journey in such guise as though he was to have certain trials of manhood on his hands. So when Thrand got Snorri's word he said to the messenger: "Thou shalt rest thyself here such time as thou wilt, but I will go at Snorri's message, so we may not journey together."

The messenger said that would be known when it was tried. But in the morning when the man awoke, lo, Thrand was clean gone. He had taken his weapons and gone east under Enni, and so as the road lay to Bulands-head, and then east across the firths (3) to the stead called Eidi. There he took to the ice and went over Coalpit-firth and Seliafirth, and thence into Swordfirth, and so in over the ice right to the firth-end, and to Tongue in the evening, whenas Snorri was set down and at table.

Snorri welcomed him lovingly, and Thrand took his greeting and asked what he would of him, and said he was ready to go whither he would, if Snorri had will to set him about somewhat. Snorri bade him abide in peace through the night, and Thrand's wet clothes were pulled off him.

Chapter 62. Snorri And Sturla Win The Work At Ere In Bitter.

The same night Snorri the Priest sent a man west to Stead-knolls to Sturla Thiodrekson, and bade him come meet him at Tongue north in Bitter the next day. Withal Snorri sent to the farmsteads thereabout, and summoned men to him, and then they went north over Gablefell-heath (4) with fifty men, and came to Tongue in Bitter in the evening, and there was Sturla abiding them with thirty men.

They fared thence out to Ere in the night-tide, and when they were come there, Uspak and his folk went on to the wall of the work, and asked who ruled that company. They told him, and bade him give up the work, but Uspak said he would nowise yield it up.

"But we will give you the same choice that we gave to the men of the Strands," said he, "that we will get us gone from the countryside, and ye shall depart from our castle."

Then Snorri bade him offer no more of such guileful choices.

But the next day, as soon as it was light, they apportioned out the work amongst them for onset, and Snorri the Priest got that part of the work that Raven the Viking guarded, and Sturla the guard of Uspak; the sons of Bork the Thick, Sam and Thormod, fell on at one side, but Thorod and Thorstein Codbiter, the sons of Snorri the Priest, on the other.

Of weapons that they could bring to bear, Uspak and his folk had for the most part stones for their defence, and they cast them forth against their foes unsparingly; for those in the work were of the briskest.

The men of Snorri and Sturla dealt chiefly with shot, both shafts and spears; and they had got together great plenty thereof, because that they had long been getting ready for the winning of the work.

So the onset was of the fiercest, and many were wounded on either side, but none slain. Snorri and his folk shot so thick and fast, that Raven with his men gave back from the wall. Then Thrand the Strider made a run at the wall, and leaped up so high that he got his axe hooked over the same, and therewith he drew himself up by the axe-shaft till he came up on to the work. But whenas Raven saw that a man had got on to the work, he ran at Thrand, and thrust at him with a spear, but Thrand put the thrust from him, and smote Raven on the arm close by the shoulder, and struck off the arm. After that many men came on him, and he let himself fall down outside the wall, and so came to his own folk.

Uspak egged on his men to stand stoutly, and fought himself in right manly wise; and when he cast stones he would go right out on the wall.

But at last whenas he was putting himself very forward and casting a stone at Sturla's company, at that very nick of time Sturla shot a twirl-spear (5) at him, which smote him in the midst, and down he fell outside of the work. Sturla straightway ran to him, and took him to himself, and would not that more men should be at the slaying of him, because he was fain that there should be but one tale to tell of his having been the banesman of Uspak. Another man fell on that same wall where the sons of Bork fell on.

Thereon the Vikings offered to give up the work, life and limb saved, and therewithal that they would lay all their case under the doom of Snorri the Priest and Sturla.

So whereas Snorri and his men had pretty much spent their shot, they said yea to this. So the work was given up, and those within rendered themselves to Snorri the Priest, and he gave them all peace of life and limb, even as they had claimed. Both Uspak and Raven died forthwith, and a third man withal of their company, but many were wounded on either side. So says Thormod in the Raven-song:

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

"Fight fell there in Bitter;
The maker of stir meseems
For the choughs of the war-maidens
Brought home the quarry.
Three leaders of sea-wain
Lay life-void before him,
The fanner of fight-pith.
There Raven gat resting.

Snorri the Priest let Uspak's widow and Glum their son dwell there still at Ere. Glum afterwards had to wife Thordis, daughter of Asmund the Long-hoary, (6) sister of Grettir the Strong; and their son was Uspak, who strove with Odd Ufeigson in Midfirth. So Snorri the Priest and Sturla scattered the Vikings each his own way, and made a clean sweep of that evil company, and then went home.

Thrand the Strider abode a little while with Snorri the Priest before he fared home out to Ingiald's-knoll, and Snorri thanked him well for his good following.

Thrand dwelt long afterwards at Ingiald's-knoll, and thereafter at Thrandstead, and was a mighty man of his hands.

Chapter 63. Of The Walking Of Thorolf Halt-Foot. He Is Dug Up And Burned. Of The Bull Glossy.

In those days dwelt Thorod Thorbrandson in Swanfirth, and had the lands both of Ulfar's-fell and of Orligstead; but to such a pass had come the haunting of Thorolf Halt-foot, that men deemed they might not abide on those lands. Lairstead withal was voided, because Thorolf straightway took to walking as soon as Arnkel was dead, and slew both men and beasts there at Lairstead; nor has any man had a heart to dwell there, by reason of these things. (7)

Then when all things were waste there, Haltfoot betook himself to Ulfar's-fell, and wrought great trouble there, and all folk were full of dread as soon as they were ware of Halt-foot's walking. At last the bonder fared in to Karstead, and bemoaned himself of that trouble to Thorod, because he was tenant of him, and he said that it was the fear of men that Halt-foot would not leave off before he had wasted all the firth both of man and beast, "and if no rede is tried I can no longer abide there, if nought be done herein."

But when Thorod heard that, he deemed the matter ill to deal with. But the next morning he let bring his horse, and called his house-carles to him, and gathered men to him from the nighest steads withal; and then they fare out to Haltfoot's-head, and come to Thorolf's howe; and he was even yet unrotten, and as like to a fiend as like could be, blue as hell, and big as a neat; and when they went about the raising of him, they could in nowise stir him. So Thorod let set lever-beams under him, and thereby they brought him up from the howe, and rolled him down to the seaside, and cut there a great bale, and set fire to it, and rolled Thorolf thereinto, and burned all up to cold coals; yet long it was or ever the fire would take on him. There was a stiff breeze, which scattered the ashes wide about as soon as the bale began to burn; but such of the ashes as they might, they cast out seaward; and so when they had made an end of the business they went home.

Now it was the time of the night-meal whenas Thorod came home, (8) and the women were at the milking; but as Thorod rode by the milking-stead a certain cow started from before him, and brake her leg. Then was she felt, but was found so meagre that it was not deemed good to slaughter her; so Thorod let bind up her leg; but she became utterly dry.

So when the cow's leg was whole again, she was brought out to Ulfar's-fell to fatten, because there the pasture was good, as it might be in an island.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Now the cow went often down to the strand and the place: whereas the bale had been litten, and licked the stones on which the ashes thereof had been driven; (9) and some men say, that whenas the island-men went along the firth with lading of stockfish, they saw there the cow up on the hillside, and another neat with her, dapple-grey of hide, of which neat no man knew how it might be there.

So in the autumn Thorod was minded to slaughter the cow, but when men went after her, she was nowhere to be found. Thorod sent after her often that autumn, but found her not, and men deemed no otherwise than that the cow was dead or stolen away.

But a little short of Yule, early on a morning at Karstead, as the herdsman went to the byre according to his wont, he saw a neat before the byre-door, and knew that thither was come the broken-legged cow which had been missing. So he led the cow into the boose and bound her, and then told Thorod. Thorod went to the byre and saw the cow, and laid his hand on her, and now finds that she is with calf, and thinks good not to kill her; and withal he had by then done all the slaughtering for his household whereof need was.

But in the spring, when summer was a little worn, the cow bore a calf, a cow-calf, and then a little after another which was a bull, and it went hardly with her, so big he was, and in a little while the cow died. So this same big calf was borne into the hall; dapple-grey of hue he was and right goodly.

Now whenas both the calves were in the hall, this one and that first born, there was therein withal an ancient carline, Thorod's foster-mother, who was as then blind. She was deemed to have been foreseeing in her earlier days, but as she grew old, all she said was taken for doting; nevertheless, things went pretty much according to her words.

So as the big calf was bound upon the floor, he cried out on high, and when the carline heard that, she started sorely, and spoke: "The voice of a troll," quoth she, "and of nought else alive; do the best ye can and slay this boder of woe straight-way.

Thorod said he would nowise slay the calf; for that it was well worthy to be nourished, and that it would turn out a noble beast if it were brought up; therewith the calf cried out yet again.

Then spake the carline, all a-flutter: "Fair foster-son," says she, "prithee kill the calf, for ill shall we have of him if he be brought up."

So he answers: "Well, I will kill him if thou wilt have it so, foster-mother."

Then were both the calves borne out, and Thorod let kill the cow-calf, and bear the other out to the barn, and withal he bade folk take heed that the carline was not told that the bull-calf was yet alive.

Now this calf grew greater day by day, so that in spring when the calves were let out, he was no less than those which had been born in the early winter. He ran about the home-mead bellowing loudly when he was let out, even as a bull might, so that he was heard clearly in the house. Then said the carline: "Ah, the troll was not slain then, and we shall have more harm of him than words can tell."

The calf waxed speedily, and went about the home-mead the summer long, and by autumn-tide was so big, that few yearling neats were equal to him; well horned he was, and the fairest of all neat to look on, and he was called Glossy. When he was two years old, he was as big as a five-year-old ox, and he was ever at home with the cows; and when Thorod went to the milking-stead, Glossy would go to him and sniff at him and lick his clothes all about, and Thorod would pat and stroke him. He was as tame both to man and beast as a sheep, but ever when he bellowed he gave forth a great and hideous voice, and when the carline heard, she started sorely thereat. When Glossy was four winters old, he would not be driven by women, children, or young

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

men; and if the carles went up to him, he would rear up, and go on in perilous wise, and yet would give way before them if hard pressed.

Now on a day Glossy came home to the byre and bellowed wondrous loud, so that he was heard as clearly in the house as though he were hard thereby. Thorod was in the hall and the carline by him, who sighed heavily and said:

"Of no account dost thou hold my word concerning the slaughtering of the bull, foster-son."

Thorod answered: "Be content, foster-mother," says he; "Glossy shall live on till autumn, and then be slaughtered, when he has got the summer's flesh oil him."

"Over-late will it be then," says she.

"That is a hard matter to tell," says Thorod. But as they spake, again the bull gave forth a voice, bellowing yet worse than before. Then sang the carline this song:

"O shaker of snow on the hair's hall that shineth,
Forth out of his head is the herd-leader sending
A voice and a crying that bodeth us blood;
And the life-days of men now his might overlayeth.
He who shaketh the green-sward will teach thee the heeding
Of the place where thine earth-gash for thee is a-gaping.
O foster-son mine, now full clearly I see it,
That the horned beast in fetters is laying thy life."

Thorod answered: "Thou growest doting, foster-mother, and this shalt thou never behold."

She sang again:

"This gold-bearing hill is full often accounted
But mad when she waggeth her tongue amongst men.
Let it be then! Yet surely the corpse do I see
All bloody, with tears of the wounds all bedabbled.
Let be! but this bull shall thy bane be, O Thorod!
For e'en now on folk he beginneth to turn
Full madly. The Goddess of gold that goes clanging,
This thing she foreseeth, e'en this and no other."

"Nay, nay, never shall it be so," says he.

"Woe worth the while I that ever so it shall be," says the carline.

Now it befell in the summer that Thorod had let rake all the hay of the home-mead into big cocks, and thereafter came on a heavy rain, and the next morning, when men came out, they saw that Glossy was come into the field, and the bar was off his horns which had been fitted to them when he fell to growing cross-grained. He had lost his old wont, whereby he would never harm the hay, how much soever he went in the home-mead; for now he kept running at the haycocks, and he thrust his horns at the bottom of one after the other, and hove them up, and scattered them in such wise about the mead; and when one was broken down, he straightway set on another, and so he fared bellowing over the meadow, and went on roaring-mad; and men stood in so great dread of him, that they durst not go and drive him from the home-field.

Then it was told Thorod what Glossy was about, and he ran out straightway; and a heap of wood lay by the door, wherefrom he caught up a great birch-rafter, and cast it aloft on to his shoulder, so that he had hold of

the fork of it, and ran down the meadow at the bull; but when Glossy saw Thorod, he took his stand and turned to meet him.

Then Thorod rated him, but he gave back no whit the more for that. So Thorod hove up the rafter and smote him betwixt the horns so great a stroke, that the rafter flew asunder at the fork; but at the blow Glossy so changed his mood, that he ran at Thorod; but he gat hold of his horns and turned him aside from him; and so it went on awhile, that Glossy set on Thorod, but Thorod gave ever back and turned the beast away, now to this side, now to that, until at last Thorod began to be mithered; then he leapt up on to the neck of the bull, and clasped him round under the throat, and lay along on his head betwixt the horns, and was minded in such wise to weary him; but the bull ran to and fro over the meadow with him.

Then saw Thorod's home-men how matters went hopelessly betwixt them, but they durst not come thereto weaponless, so they went in after their weapons; and when they came out, they ran down into the meadow with spears and other weapons, and whenas the bull beheld that, he thrust his head down betwixt his feet, and shook himself withal, so that he got one horn under Thorod, and then afterwards he tossed up his head so hard, that Thorod flew feet up, so that he well-nigh stood with his head on the bull's neck, and as he swept down, Glossy set his head under him, so that one horn went into his belly and stood deep in. Then Thorod let loose the hold of his hands, and the beast set up a mighty bellow, and ran along the meadow down to the river; and Thorod's homefolk ran after Glossy and chased him athwart the scree called Geirvor, and right away till they came to a certain fen, down before the stead at Hella. There sprang the bull out unto the fen, and the end of it all was, that he never came up again; and that place is since called Glossy's-well.

But when the home-folk were come back to the meadow, lo! Thorod had gone thence afoot. He had gone home to the house, and by then they came therein, he had lain down in his bed, and there he lay dead; and so he was carried to the church withal, and was buried.

Kar, the son of Thorod, took the stead in Swanfirth after his father, and he dwelt there long afterwards, and from him is the stead called Karstead.

Chapter 64. The Last Tidings Of Biorn The Champion Of The Broadwickers.

There was a man named Gudleif, the son of Gunnlaug the Wealthy of Streamfirth, the brother of Thorfin, from whom are come the Sturlungs. Gudleif was much of a seafarer, and he owned a big ship of burden, and Thorolf, the son of Loft-o'-th'Ere, owned another, whenas they fought with Gyrd, son of Earl Sigvaldi; at which fight Gyrd lost his eye.

But late in the days of King Olaf the Holy, Gudleif went a merchant voyage west to Dublin, and when he sailed from the west he was minded for Iceland, and he sailed round Ireland by the west, and fell in with gales from east and north-east, and so drove a long way west into the main and south-westward withal, so that they saw nought of land; by then was the summer pretty far spent, and therefore they made many vows, that they might escape from out the main.

But so it befell at last that they were ware of land; a great land it was, but they knew nought what land. Then such rede took Gudleif and his crew, that they should sail unto land, for they thought it ill to have to do any more with the main sea; and so then they got them good haven.

And when they had been there a little while, men came to meet them whereof none knew aught, though they deemed somewhat that they spake in the Erse tongue. At last they came in such throngs that they made many hundreds, and they laid hands on them all, and bound them, and drove them up into the country, and they

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

were brought to a certain mote and were doomed thereat. And this they came to know, that some would that they should be slain, and othersome that they should be allotted to the countryfolk, and be their slaves.

And so, while these matters are in debate, they see a company of men come riding, and a banner borne over the company, and it seemed to them that there should be some great man amongst these; and so as that company drew nigh, they saw under the banner a man riding, big and like a great chief of aspect, but much stricken in years, and hoary withal; and all they who were there before, worshipped that man, and greeted him as their lord, and they soon found that all counsels and awards were brought whereas he was.

So this man sent for Gudleif and his folk, and whenas they came before him, he spake to them in the tongue of the Northmen, and asked them whence of lands they were. They said that they were Icelanders for the more part. So the man asked who the Icelanders might be.

Then Gudleif stood forth before the man, and greeted him in worthy wise, and he took his greeting well, and asked whence of Iceland he was. And he told him, of Burgfirth. Then asked he whence of Burgfirth he was, and Gudleif told him. After that he asked him closely concerning each and all of the mightiest men of Burgfirth and Broadfirth, and amidst this speech he asked concerning Snorri the Priest, and his sister Thurid of Frodiswater, and most of all of the youngling Kiartan, who in those days was gotten to be goodman of Frodis-water.

But now meanwhile the folk of that land were crying out in another place that some counsel should be taken concerning the ship's crew; so the big man went away from them, and called to him by name twelve of his own men, and they sat talking a long while, and thereafter went to the man-mote.

Then the big man said to Gudleif and his folk: "We people of the country have talked your matter over somewhat, and they have given the whole thing up to my ruling; and I for my part will give you leave to go your ways whithersoever ye will; and though ye may well deem that the summer wears late now, yet will I counsel you to get you gone hence, for here dwelleth a folk untrusty and ill to deal with, and they deem their laws to be already broken of you."

Gudleif says: "What shall we say concerning this, if it befall us to come back to the land of our kin, as to who has given us our freedom?"

He answered- "That will I not tell you; for I should be ill- content that any of my kin or my foster-brethren should make such a voyage hither as ye would have made, had I not been here for your avail; and now withal," says he, "my days have come so far, that on any day it may be looked for that eld shall stride over my head; yea, and though I live yet awhile, yet are there here men mightier than I, who will have little will to give peace to outland men; albeit they be not abiding nearby whereas ye have now come."

Then this man let make their ship ready for sea and abode with them till the wind was fair for sailing; and or ever he and Gudleif parted, he drew a gold ring from off his arm, and gave it into Gudleif's hand, and therewithal a good sword, and then spake to Gudleif: "If it befall thee to come back to thy fosterland, then shalt thou deliver this sword to that Kiartan, the goodman at Frodiswater; but the ring to Thurid his mother."

Then said Gudleif: "And what shall we say concerning the sender of these good things to them?"

He answered: "Say that he sends them who was a greater friend of the goodwife of Frodiswater than of the Priest of Holyfell, her brother; but and if any shall deem that they know thereby who owned these fair things, tell them this my word withal, that I forbid one and all to go seek me, for this land lacks all peace, unless to such as it may befall to come aland in such lucky wise as ye have done; the land also is wide, and harbours are ill to find therein, and in all places trouble and war await outland men, unless it befall them as it has now

befallen you."

Thereafter they parted. Gudleif and his men put to sea, and made Ireland late in the autumn, and abode in Dublin through the winter. But the next summer Gudleif sailed to Iceland, and delivered the goodly gifts there, and all men held it for true that this must have been Biorn the Broadwick Champion; but no other true token have men thereof other, than these even now told.

Chapter 65. The Kindred Of Snorri The Priest; The Death Of Him.

Snorri the Priest dwelt at Tongue for twenty winters, and at first had a power there somewhat begrudged, while those brawlers were alive, Thorstein Kuggison to wit, and Thorgils the son of Halla, besides other of the greater men who bore him ill-will. Withal he cometh into many stories, and of him the tale also telleth in the story of the Laxdale men, as is well known to many; whereas he was the greatest friend of Gudrun, the daughter of Osvif, and of her sons. He also hath to do with the story of the Heathslaughters, and most of all men, next indeed to Gudmund the Rich, lent aid to Bardi after the manslayings on the Heath.

But as he grew older, ill-will against him began to wane, chiefly by reason of those who bore him envy growing fewer. His friendships were greatly bettered by his knitting alliances with the greatest chiefs in Broadfirth and wide about elsewhere.

He married his daughter Sigrid to Brand the Bounteous, the son of Vermund the Slender; Kolli, the son of Thormod, the son of Thorlak, the brother of Steinthor of Ere, had her to wife thereafter; and they, Kolli and Sigrid, had house in Bearhaven.

His daughter Unn he married to Slaying-Bardi; Sigurd, the son of Thorir Hound of Birch-isle in Haloga]and, had her to wife afterwards, and their daughter was Ranveig, whom Jon, the son of Arni, the son of Arni, the son of Arnmod, had to wife; their son was Vidkunn of Birch-isle, whilome one of the foremost among the barons of Norway.

His daughter Thordis, Snorri married to Bolli, son of Bolli, and from them is sprung the race of the Gilsbeckings.

His daughter Hallbera, Snorri married to Thord, the son of Sturla Thiodrekson, whose daughter was Thurid, the wife of Haflidi Marson, and from them a mighty kindred has sprung.

Thora his daughter, Snorri married to Keru-Bersi, the son of Haldor, the son of Olaf of Herdholt; Thorgrim the Burner afterwards had her to wife, and from them a great and a noble kin has sprung.

The other daughters of Snorri were married after his death. Thurid the Wise, the daughter of Snorri, Gunnlaug, the son of Steinthor of Ere, had for wife; but Gudrun, the daughter of Snorri the Priest, was wedded to Kalf of Sunhome. Thorgeir of Asgarths-knolls married Haldora, Snorri's daughter. Alof, Snorri's daughter, Jorund Thorfinnson had to wife; he was brother to Gudlaug of Streamfirth.

Haldor, the son of Snorri the Priest, was the noblest of his sons; he kept house in Herdholt in Laxdale. From him are come the Sturlungs and the Waterfirth folk. The second noblest son of Snorri the Priest was Thorod, who abode at Spaewife's-fell in Skagastrand.

Mani, the son of Snorri, dwelt at Sheepfell; his son was Liot, who was called Mana-Liot and was accounted of as the greatest among the grandsons of Snorri the Priest.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

Thorstein, the son of Snorri, dwelt at Bathbrent, and from him are sprung the Asbirnings in Skagafiord, and a great stock withal.

Thord Kausi, Snorri's son, dwelt in Dufgusdale.

Eyolf, the son of Snorri, dwelt at Lambstead on the Mires.

Thorleif, the son of Snorri the Priest, dwelt on Midfell-strand; from him are sprung the men of Ballara.

Snorri, the son of Snorri the Priest, dwelt in Tongue after his father.

Klepp was hight a son of Snorri whose abiding-place men wot nought of, nor know men any tales to tell of him.

Snorri died in Saelings-dale-Tongue one winter after the fall of King Olaf the Holy. He was buried at the church he let rear at Tongue; but at the time the church was moved, his bones were taken up and brought down to the place whereas the church now is; and a witness thereat was Gudny, Bodvar's daughter, the mother of those sons of Sturla: Snorri, Thord, and Sighvat, to wit; and she said that they were bones of a man of middle height, and not right big. At that same time were also taken out of earth the bones of Bork the Thick, the father's brother of Snorri the Priest; and she said that they were mighty big. Then, too, were dug out the bones of the carline Thordis, the daughter of Thorbiorn Sur, the mother of Snorri the Priest; and Gudny said that they were small bones of a woman, and as black as if they had been singed.

All these bones were buried again in earth where the church is now.

AND HEREWITH ENDETH THE STORY OF THE THORSNESSINGS, THE ERE-DWELLERS AND THE SWANFIRTHERS.

ENDNOTES:

(1) "Now Sturla Thiodrekson sent word from the west", namely, to Snorri the Priest, now living at Saelingsdale-tongue. The two localities are due north and south by the compass. In the local speech, however, to this day, the direction from Saurby, Sturla's countryside, to Saelingsdale, is said to be from the west. The real reason of such liberty being taken with the actual cardinal point of the compass is that, the choice of terms lying between west and north, the latter could not be used, since the listener to the story would involuntarily connect it at once with the North-country, where, too, in Eyjafjord, there is even a Saurby, while the former term indicates Saurby as that of the West-country, and also points to the fact, that the valley so called opens upon the district known as the West-Firths proper, which cut into the peninsula across the bay right in front of the view opened out from the mouth of the Saurby valley.

(2) (Thrand) "was said to be not of one shape while he was heathen", etc. — ok var kallathr eigi einhamr. The meaning of this is, that Thrand had the power of changing his shape as occasion served, which power was believed to be the special gift of Odin, the first and greatest of shape or skin-changers: "Odin changed shapes; lay then the body, as if asleep or dead, while he himself was a fowl, or a four-footed beast, or fish, or snake, and went in a moment into far-away countries on his own or other folks: errands." — "Ynglinga saga" (chapter vii). This same power he imparted to goddesses and Valkyrjur, and among men it was specially imparted to his immediate descendants, the Volsung family ("Volsunga saga", chapters vii and viii). Witches and people "ancient in mind", as well as those who were supposed to descend from trolls and giants, were chiefly credited with this peculiar power. The belief is not peculiar to the North, though few peoples' literature is so full of it as the Icelandic; it is common to all nations, its primitive source being probably the Dream.

Story of the Ere-Dwellers ("Eyrbyggja Saga")

(3) "East across the firths". The "firths" the author has in his mind are small bights that cut into the land east of Bulands-head, together with the broad bay called Ground firth, the eastern littoral of which is formed by Ere (Onward Ere), on the narrow isthmus of which, near its eastern shore, is the homestead of Eidi, from which Thrand took his straight course over the icelaid firths unto Tongue. The distance Thrand made was, as the crow flies, forty-seven English miles -- with the necessary bends, some fifty miles odd; he walked this distance apparently in about twelve hours, at a steady pace consequently of about four miles an hour.

(4) "They went" (Snorri and his band) "north over Gablefell-heath... and came to Tongue in Bitter in the evening, and there was Sturla abiding them." Snorri took the way in a north-easterly direction, first probably along the neighbouring Swinedale, from which he struck, on the right, the road over Gablefell-heath, while Sturla, living further to the north, went straight east, and came down into Tongue by the road leading over Tongueheath.

(5) "Twirl-spear," *sneri-spjot*, a weapon which elsewhere is called either *snoeri-spjot* ("Heimskringla", 537) or *snaerisspjot* (= *snoeris-spjot*) (Fornm. sogur, vi 76, Isl. sogur, ii 1830, p. 267). The Dictionary only translates it javelin. Weinhold, "Altnordisches Leben," 194, calls it "Spiess mit Schwungriemen", but we don't see what sort of purpose hurling-strops could have answered in connection with such a weapon. It seems more likely that it was a weapon with some contrivance by which it was made to twirl round in the air for a steadier flight and surer aim.

(6) "Glum afterwards had to wife Thordis, daughter of Asmund the Long-hoary," etc., cf. The Story of the Banded Men, vol. i, 76 foll.; The Story of Grettir the Strong, ch. xiv.

(7) "Nor has any man had heart to dwell there (at Lairstead) by reason of these things." To the author of our saga thus a tradition was known to the effect, that after Arnkel's death Lairstead was never, up to his day, inhabited. Arni Thorlacius, in his description of the localities of our saga (Safn til sogu Islands, ii. 280) says: "This is now a waste place, and without doubt has been so for many centuries, so little is now to be seen of the remains of the housetofts. The house has stood in the midst of a level lawn, a short way north-below Vadils-head, about six hundred feet up from the sea; the site, however, is called Lairstead (a Bolstath) still to this day."

(8) "Now it was at the time of night-meal whenas Thorod came home." This was the last of the so-called "dags-mork," day-marks, or time points into which the civil day of Iceland was and still is divided. These divisions are as follows:

1. "Rismal", rise-meal, or "mithr morgunn", "mith-morgunn", mid-morning, sun due E. = 6 A.M.
2. "Dagmal", daymeal, sun due S.E. = 9 A.M.
3. "Hadegei", highday, noon, sun due S. = 12 o'clock.
4. "Mithdegi" or "mithmunda", midday, sun due S.S.W. = 1:30 P.M.
5. "Non", nones, sun due S.W. = 3 P.M.
6. "Mithr aptann" or "mithaptann", mid-eve, sun due W. = 6 P.M.
7. "Nattmal", nightmeal, sun due N.W. = 9 P.M.

(9) "Now the cow went often down to the strand, and the place whereas the bale had been litten, and licked the stones whereon the ashes thereof had been driven." It seems clear, that behind this feature of this uncanny story there is floating a dim reminiscence from Snorra Edda's account of the cow Authhumla or Authhumbla: "Then said Gangleri: 'What did the cow feed on?' High says: 'She licked the rimy stones that were salt,'" etc., i, 46.

Appendix A. The Children Of Snorri The Priest.

(From Cod. A.M. 445b, 4to. Printed in "Eyrbyggjasaga", ed. G. Vigfusson, Leipzig, 1864, pp. 125–26.)

Snorri the Priest had nineteen children freeborn who got over the days of childhood. Thord Kausi was the eldest, the second was Thorod, the third Thorstein, the fourth Gudlaug the monk.

These were sons of Asdis, the daughter of Slaying–Stir.

The fifth child of Snorri was Sigrid, the sixth Unn; they were daughters of Thurid, the daughter of Illugi the Red.

The seventh child was Klepp, the eighth Haldora, the ninth Thordis, the tenth Gudrun, the eleventh Haldor, the twelfth Mani, the thirteenth Eyolf, the fourteenth Thora, the fifteenth Hallbera, the sixteenth Thurid, the seventeenth Thorleif, the eighteenth Alof, the nineteenth Snorri, who was born after the death of his father.

These were the children of Halfrid, the daughter of Einar.

Snorri the Priest had three children born of bondwomen: a second Thord Kausi, Jorund, and Thorhild.

Snorri the Priest was fourteen winters old when he went abroad, where he tarried one winter. But the next winter after his coming back he spent at Holyfell with Bork the Thick, his father's brother, and with Thordis his mother. That autumn Eyolf the Gray, son of Thord the Yeller, slew Gisli Surson, and in the spring following, when he was sixteen winters old, Snorri set up house at Holyfell, and abode there twenty and three winters or ever Christ's faith was made law in the land; but after that he abode eight winters at Holyfell; and in the last of those winters Thorgest, son of Thorhall, slew Slaying–Stir, the father–in–law of Snorri the Priest, at Iorvi in Flisa–wharf.

Thereafter he flitted his household to Saelingsdale–Tongue, and abode there for twenty winters. He had builded a church at Holyfell, and another at Tongue in Saelings–dale, and some folk say that a second time he had a church reared at Holyfell in fellowship with Gudrun, Osvif's daughter, when that church was burnt down which he himself had erst set up there. He died of sickness in the seventh winter of the seventh ten of his age, and that was one winter after the fall of King Olaf the Holy, and was buried there at his home of Saelings–dale–Tongue, at the church which he had had reared there himself. Much blessed in a mighty and great offspring he has now become, in that most of the noblest men in the land trace their line of kinship up to him, beside the Birch–islanders in Halogaland, the "Beards" of Gata in Faroe, and many other great folk, both in this and in other lands, whereof the tale is not told here.