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The Saga of Eric the Red

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The Saga
of
Eric the Red

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THE SAGA OF ERIC THE RED

ALSO CALLED THE SAGA OF THORFINN KARLSEFNI¹

*The Saga of Eric the Red, also called the Saga of Thorfinn Karlsefni and Snorri Thorbrandsson.*² — Olaf was the name of a warrior-king, who was called Olaf the White. He was the son of King Ingiald, Helgi's son, the son of Olaf, Gudraud's son, son of Halfdan Whiteleg, king of the Uplands-men.³ Olaf engaged in a Western freebooting expedition and captured Dublin in Ireland and the Shire of Dublin, over which he became king.⁴ He married Aud the Wealthy, daughter of Ketil Flatnose, son of Biorn Buna, a famous man of Norway. Their son was called Thorstein the Red. Olaf was killed in battle in Ireland, and Aud and Thorstein went then to the Hebrides; there Thorstein married Thurid, daughter of Eyvind Easterling, sister of Helgi the Lean; they had many children. Thorstein became a warrior-king, and entered into fellowship with Earl Sigurd the Mighty, son of Eystein the Rattler. They conquered Caithness and Sutherland, Ross and Moray, and more than the half of Scotland. Over these Thorstein became king, ere he was betrayed by the Scots, and was slain there in battle. Aud was at Caithness when she heard of Thorstein's death; she thereupon caused a ship to be secretly built in the forest, and when she was ready, she sailed out to the Orkneys. There she bestowed Groa, Thorstein the Red's daughter, in marriage; she was the mother of Grelad, whom

¹ The translation that follows, by Arthur Middleton Reeves, is based on the text of Hauk's Book, No. 544 of the Arna-Magnæan Collection, collated with No. 557 of the same collection. In *Origines Islandicæ*, II. 610, this saga is called "The Story of Thorfinn Carlsemne."

² The rubrics here given in italics are found in the original manuscript.

³ In eastern Norway.

⁴ From 853 to 871.

Earl Thorfinn, Skull-cleaver, married. After this Aud set out to seek Iceland, and had on board her ship twenty free-men. Aud arrived in Iceland, and passed the first winter at Biarnarhöfn with her brother, Biorn. Aud afterwards took possession of all the Dale country between Dögurðar river and Skraumuhlaups river. She lived at Hvamm, and held her orisons at Krossholar, where she caused crosses to be erected, for she had been baptized and was a devout believer. With her there came out [to Iceland] many distinguished men, who had been captured in the Western freebooting expedition, and were called slaves. Vifil was the name of one of these: he was a highborn man, who had been taken captive in the Western sea, and was called a slave, before Aud freed him; now when Aud gave homesteads to the members of her crew, Vifil asked wherefore she gave him no homestead as to the other men. Aud replied, that this should make no difference to him, saying, that he would be regarded as a distinguished man wherever he was. She gave him Vifilsdal, and there he dwelt. He married a woman whose name was . . . ;¹ their sons were Thorbiorn and Thorgeir. They were men of promise, and grew up with their father.²

Eric the Red finds Greenland. — There was a man named Thorvald; he was a son of Asvald, Ulf's son, Eyxna-Thori's son. His son's name was Eric. He and his father went from Jaederen³ to Iceland, on account of manslaughter, and settled on Hornstrandir, and dwelt at Drangar. There Thorvald died, and Eric then married Thorhild, a daughter of Jorund, Atli's son, and Thorbiorg the Ship-chested, who had been married before to Thorbiorn of the Haukadal family. Eric then removed from the North, and cleared land in Haukadal, and dwelt at Ericsstadir by Vatnshorn. Then Eric's thralls caused a land-slide on Valthiof's farm, Valthiofsstadir. Eyjolf

¹ A blank in the original manuscript.

² This introductory paragraph, giving at the end the ancestry of Gudrid, the daughter of Thorbiorn Vifilson and a prominent figure in the Vinland voyages, seems to come first on account of the earlier historical allusions that it contains. The account of Gudrid is continued in the third paragraph.

³ In southwestern Norway.

the Foul, Valthiof's kinsman, slew the thralls near Skeidsbrekkur above Vatnshorn. For this Eric killed Eyiolf the Foul, and he also killed Duelling-Hrafn, at Leikskalar. Geirstein and Odd of Jorva, Eyiolf's kinsmen, conducted the prosecution for the slaying of their kinsmen, and Eric was, in consequence, banished from Haukadal. He then took possession of Brokey and Eyxney, and dwelt at Tradir on Sudrey, the first winter. It was at this time that he loaned Thorgest his outer daïs-boards;¹ Eric afterwards went to Eyxney, and dwelt at Ericstad. He then demanded his outer daïs-boards, but did not obtain them. Eric then carried the outer daïs-boards away from Breidabolstad, and Thorgest gave chase. They came to blows a short distance from the farm of Drangar. There two of Thorgest's sons were killed and certain other men besides. After this each of them retained a considerable body of men with him at his home. Styr gave Eric his support, as did also Eyiolf of Sviney, Thorbiorn, Vifil's son, and the sons of Thorbrand of Alptafirth; while Thorgest was backed by the sons of Thord the Yeller, and Thorgeir of Hitardal, Aslak of Langadal and his son, Illugi. Eric and his people were condemned to outlawry at Thorsness-thing. He equipped his ship for a voyage, in Ericsvag; while Eyiolf concealed him in Dimunarvag, when Thorgest and his people were searching for him among the islands. He said to them, that it was his intention to go in search of that land which Gunnbiorn, son of Ulf the Crow, saw when he was driven out of his course, westward across the main, and discovered Gunnbiorns-skerries.² He told them that he would return again to his friends, if he should succeed in finding that country. Thorbiorn, and Eyiolf, and Styr accompanied Eric out beyond the islands, and they parted with the greatest friendliness; Eric said to them that he would render them similar aid, so far as it might lie within his power, if they should ever stand in need of his help. Eric

¹ Movable planks used in constructing the lock-beds of the sleeping apartment. They were often beautifully carved, and hence valuable.

² An island midway between Iceland and Greenland, discovered in the latter part of the ninth century. Gunnbiorn was a Norwegian. This island is no longer above the surface. See Fiske, *The Discovery of America*, p. 242.

sailed out to sea from Snaefells-iokul, and arrived at that ice-mountain which is called Blacksark. Thence he sailed to the southward, that he might ascertain whether there was habitable country in that direction. He passed the first winter at Ericsey, near the middle of the Western Settlement.¹ In the following spring he proceeded to Ericsfirth, and selected a site there for his homestead. That summer he explored the western uninhabited region, remaining there for a long time, and assigning many local names there. The second winter he spent at Ericsholms beyond Hvarfsgnipa. But the third summer he sailed northward to Snaefell,² and into Hrafnfirth. He believed then that he had reached the head of Ericsfirth; he turned back then, and remained the third winter at Ericsey at the mouth of Ericsfirth. The following summer he sailed to Iceland, and landed in Breidafirth. He remained that winter with Ingolf at Holmlatr. In the spring he and Thorgest fought together, and Eric was defeated; after this a reconciliation was effected between them. That summer Eric set out to colonize the land which he had discovered, and which he called Greenland, because, he said, men would be the more readily persuaded thither if the land had a good name.³

¹ This should read *Eastern Settlement*, evidently a clerical error in an original manuscript, as both Hauk's Book and AM. 557 reproduce it. There were two settlements in Greenland, the Eastern and Western, both, however, to the westward of Cape Farewell, and between that cape on the south and Disco Island on the north. Ericsey (*i.e.*, Eric's Island) was at the mouth of Ericsfirth, near the present Julianshaab. For further details on the geography of these settlements, see Reeves, *The Finding of Wineland the Good*, p. 166, (25), and Fiske, *The Discovery of America*, I. 158, note.

² On the western coast of Greenland, about 70° N. Lat.

³ The saga up to this point is taken from Landnama-bok, the great Icelandic authority on early genealogy and history. It might well have included one more paragraph (the succeeding one), which gives an approximate date to the colonization of Greenland: "Ari, Thorgil's son, says that that summer twenty-five ships sailed to Greenland out of Borgfirth and Broadfirth; but fourteen only reached their destination; some were driven back, and some were lost. This was sixteen [S: fifteen] winters before Christianity was legally adopted in Iceland." That is, in about 985, as Christianity was accepted in 1000 (or 1001). There is a possible variation of a year in the usually accepted date. See *Origines Islandicae*, I. 369.

Concerning Thorbiorn. — Thorgeir, Vifil's son, married, and took to wife Arnora, daughter of Einar of Laugarbrekka, Sigmund's son, son of Ketil Thistil, who settled Thistilsfirth. Einar had another daughter named Hallveig; she was married to Thorbiorn, Vifil's son, who got with her Laugarbrekka-land on Hellisvellir. Thorbiorn moved thither, and became a very distinguished man. He was an excellent husbandman, and had a great estate. Gudrid was the name of Thorbiorn's daughter. She was the most beautiful of her sex, and in every respect a very superior woman. There dwelt at Arnarstapi a man named Orm, whose wife's name was Halldis. Orm was a good husbandman, and a great friend of Thorbiorn, and Gudrid lived with him for a long time as a foster-daughter. There was a man named Thorgeir, who lived at Thorgeirsfell; he was very wealthy and had been manumitted; he had a son named Einar, who was a handsome, well-bred man, and very showy in his dress. Einar was engaged in trading-voyages from one country to the other, and had prospered in this. He always spent his winters alternately either in Iceland or in Norway.

Now it is to be told, that one autumn, when Einar was in Iceland, he went with his wares out along Snaefellsness, with the intention of selling them. He came to Arnarstapi, and Orm invited him to remain with him, and Einar accepted this invitation, for there was a strong friendship [between Orm and himself]. Einar's wares were carried into a store-house, where he unpacked them, and displayed them to Orm and the men of his household, and asked Orm to take such of them as he liked. Orm accepted this offer, and said that Einar was a good merchant, and was greatly favored by fortune. Now, while they were busied about the wares, a woman passed before the door of the store-house. Einar inquired of Orm: "Who was that handsome woman who passed before the door? I have never seen her here before." Orm replies: "That is Gudrid, my foster-child, the daughter of Thorbiorn of Laugarbrekka." "She must be a good match," said Einar; "has she had any suitors?" Orm replies: "In good sooth she has been

courted, friend, nor is she easily to be won, for it is believed that both she and her father will be very particular in their choice of a husband." "Be that as it may," quoth Einar, "she is a woman to whom I mean to pay my addresses, and I would have thee present this matter to her father in my behalf, and use every exertion to bring it to a favorable issue, and I shall reward thee to the full of my friendship, if I am successful. It may be that Thorbiorn will regard the connection as being to our mutual advantage, for [while] he is a most honorable man and has a goodly home, his personal effects, I am told, are somewhat on the wane; but neither I nor my father are lacking in lands or chattels, and Thorbiorn would be greatly aided thereby, if this match should be brought about." "Surely I believe myself to be thy friend," replies Orm, "and yet I am by no means disposed to act in this matter, for Thorbiorn hath a very haughty spirit, and is moreover a most ambitious man." Einar replied that he wished for nought else than that his suit should be broached; Orm replied, that he should have his will. Einar fared again to the South until he reached his home. Sometime after this, Thorbiorn had an autumn feast, as was his custom, for he was a man of high position. Hither came Orm of Arnarstapi, and many other of Thorbiorn's friends. Orm came to speech with Thorbiorn, and said, that Einar of Thorgeirsfell had visited him not long before, and that he was become a very promising man. Orm now makes known the proposal of marriage in Einar's behalf, and added that for some persons and for some reasons it might be regarded as a very appropriate match: "thou mayest greatly strengthen thyself thereby, master, by reason of the property." Thorbiorn answers: "Little did I expect to hear such words from thee, that I should marry my daughter to the son of a thrall; and that, because it seems to thee that my means are diminishing, wherefore she shall not remain longer with thee since thou deemest so mean a match as this suitable for her." Orm afterward returned to his home, and all of the invited guests to their respective households, while Gudrid remained behind with her father, and tarried at home that

winter. But in the spring Thorbiorn gave an entertainment to his friends, to which many came, and it was a noble feast, and at the banquet Thorbiorn called for silence, and spoke: "Here have I passed a goodly lifetime, and have experienced the good-will of men toward me, and their affection; and, methinks, our relations together have been pleasant; but now I begin to find myself in straitened circumstances, although my estate has hitherto been accounted a respectable one. Now will I rather abandon my farming, than lose my honor, and rather leave the country, than bring disgrace upon my family; wherefore I have now concluded to put that promise to the test, which my friend Eric the Red made, when we parted company in Breidafirth. It is my present design to go to Greenland this summer, if matters fare as I wish." The folk were greatly astonished at this plan of Thorbiorn's, for he was blessed with many friends, but they were convinced that he was so firmly fixed in his purpose, that it would not avail to endeavor to dissuade him from it. Thorbiorn bestowed gifts upon his guests, after which the feast came to an end, and the folk returned to their homes. Thorbiorn sells his lands and buys a ship, which was laid up at the mouth of Hraunhöfn. Thirty persons joined him in the voyage; among these were Orm of Arnarstapi, and his wife, and other of Thorbiorn's friends, who would not part from him. Then they put to sea. When they sailed the weather was favorable, but after they came out upon the high-seas the fair wind failed, and there came great gales, and they lost their way, and had a very tedious voyage that summer. Then illness appeared among their people, and Orm and his wife Halldis died, and the half of their company. The sea began to run high, and they had a very wearisome and wretched voyage in many ways, but arrived, nevertheless, at Heriolsness in Greenland, on the very eve of winter.¹ At Heriolsness lived a man named Thorkel. He was a man of ability and an excellent husbandman. He received Thorbiorn and all of his ship's company, and entertained them well during the winter. At that time there was a

¹ "Winter-night-tide" was about the middle of October.

season of great dearth in Greenland; those who had been at the fisheries had had poor hauls, and some had not returned. There was a certain woman there in the settlement, whose name was Thorbiorg. She was a prophetess, and was called Little Sibyl. She had had nine sisters, all of whom were prophetesses, but she was the only one left alive. It was Thorbiorg's custom in the winters, to go to entertainments, and she was especially sought after at the homes of those who were curious to know their fate, or what manner of season might be in store for them; and inasmuch as Thorkel was the chief yeoman in the neighborhood, it was thought to devolve upon him to find out when the evil time, which was upon them, would cease. Thorkel invited the prophetess to his home, and careful preparations were made for her reception, according to the custom which prevailed, when women of her kind were to be entertained. A high seat was prepared for her, in which a cushion filled with poultry feathers was placed. When she came in the evening, with the man who had been sent to meet her, she was clad in a dark-blue cloak, fastened with a strap, and set with stones quite down to the hem. She wore glass beads around her neck, and upon her head a black lamb-skin hood, lined with white cat-skin. In her hands she carried a staff, upon which there was a knob, which was ornamented with brass, and set with stones up about the knob. Circling her waist she wore a girdle of touch-wood, and attached to it a great skin pouch, in which she kept the charms which she used when she was practising her sorcery. She wore upon her feet shaggy calf-skin shoes, with long, tough lachets, upon the ends of which there were large brass buttons. She had cat-skin gloves upon her hands, which were white inside and lined with fur. When she entered, all of the folk felt it to be their duty to offer her becoming greetings. She received the salutations of each individual according as he pleased her. Yeoman Thorkel took the sibyl by the hand, and led her to the seat which had been made ready for her. Thorkel bade her run her eyes over man and beast and home. She had little to say concerning all these. The tables were brought forth in the

evening, and it remains to be told what manner of food was prepared for the prophetess. A porridge of goat's beestings was made for her, and for meat there were dressed the hearts of every kind of beast, which could be obtained there. She had a brass spoon, and a knife with a handle of walrus tusk, with a double hasp of brass around the haft, and from this the point was broken. And when the tables were removed, Yeoman Thorkel approaches Thorbiorg, and asks how she is pleased with the home, and the character of the folk, and how speedily she would be likely to become aware of that concerning which he had questioned her, and which the people were anxious to know. She replied that she could not give an opinion in this matter before the morrow, after that she had slept there through the night. And on the morrow, when the day was far spent, such preparations were made as were necessary to enable her to accomplish her soothsaying. She bade them bring her those women, who knew the incantation, which she required to work her spells, and which she called Warlocks; but such women were not to be found. Thereupon a search was made throughout the house, to see whether any one knew this [incantation]. Then says Gudrid: "Although I am neither skilled in the black art nor a sibyl, yet my foster-mother, Halldis, taught me in Iceland that spell-song, which she called Warlocks." Thorbiorg answered: "Then art thou wise in season!" Gudrid replies: "This is an incantation and ceremony of such a kind, that I do not mean to lend it any aid, for that I am a Christian woman." Thorbiorg answers: "It might so be that thou couldst give thy help to the company here, and still be no worse woman than before; however I leave it with Thorkel to provide for my needs." Thorkel now so urged Gudrid, that she said she must needs comply with his wishes. The women then made a ring round about, while Thorbiorg sat up on the spell-daïs. Gudrid then sang the song, so sweet and well, that no one remembered ever before to have heard the melody sung with so fair a voice as this. The sorceress thanked her for the song, and said: "She has indeed lured many spirits hither, who think it pleasant to hear this song, those who were wont

to forsake us hitherto and refuse to submit themselves to us. Many things are now revealed to me, which hitherto have been hidden, both from me and from others. And I am able to announce that this period of famine will not endure longer, but the season will mend as spring approaches. The visitation of disease, which has been so long upon you, will disappear sooner than expected. And thee, Gudrid, I shall reward out of hand, for the assistance, which thou hast vouchsafed us, since the fate in store for thee is now all made manifest to me. Thou shalt make a most worthy match here in Greenland, but it shall not be of long duration for thee, for thy future path leads out to Iceland, and a lineage both great and goodly shall spring from thee, and above thy line brighter rays of light shall shine, than I have power clearly to unfold. And now fare well and health to thee, my daughter!" After this the folk advanced to the sibyl, and each besought information concerning that about which he was most curious. She was very ready in her responses, and little of that which she foretold failed of fulfilment. After this they came for her from a neighboring farmstead, and she thereupon set out thither. Thorbiorn was then sent for, since he had not been willing to remain at home, while such heathen rites were practising. The weather improved speedily, when the spring opened, even as Thorbiorg had prophesied. Thorbiorn equipped his ship and sailed away, until he arrived at Brattahlid.¹ Eric received him with open arms, and said that it was well that he had come thither. Thorbiorn and his household remained with him during the winter, while quarters were provided for the crew among the farmers. And the following spring Eric gave Thorbiorn land on Stokkaness, where a goodly farmstead was founded, and there he lived thenceforward.

Concerning Leif the Lucky and the Introduction of Christianity into Greenland. — Eric was married to a woman named Thorhild, and had two sons; one of these was named Thorstein, and the other Leif. They were both promising men. Thorstein lived at home with his father, and there was not at

¹ The home of Eric the Red, in the Eastern Settlement.

that time a man in Greenland who was accounted of so great promise as he. Leif had sailed to Norway,¹ where he was at the court of King Olaf Tryggvason. When Leif sailed from Greenland, in the summer, they were driven out of their course to the Hebrides. It was late before they got fair winds thence, and they remained there far into the summer. Leif became enamored of a certain woman, whose name was Thorgunna. She was a woman of fine family, and Leif observed that she was possessed of rare intelligence. When Leif was preparing for his departure Thorgunna asked to be permitted to accompany him. Leif inquired whether she had in this the approval of her kinsmen. She replied that she did not care for it. Leif responded that he did not deem it the part of wisdom to abduct so high-born a woman in a strange country, "and we so few in number." "It is by no means certain that thou shalt find this to be the better decision," said Thorgunna. "I shall put it to the proof, notwithstanding," said Leif. "Then I tell thee," said Thorgunna, "that I am no longer a lone woman, for I am pregnant, and upon thee I charge it. I foresee that I shall give birth to a male child. And though thou give this no heed, yet will I rear the boy, and send him to thee in Greenland, when he shall be fit to take his place with other men. And I foresee that thou wilt get as much profit of this son as is thy due from this our parting; moreover, I mean to come to Greenland myself before the end comes." Leif gave her a gold finger-ring, a Greenland wadmal mantle, and a belt of walrus-tusk. This boy came to Greenland, and was called Thorgils. Leif acknowledged his paternity, and some men will have it that this Thorgils came to Iceland in the summer before the Froda-wonder.² However, this Thorgils was afterwards in Greenland, and there seemed to be something not altogether natural about him before the end came. Leif and his com-

¹ This was evidently the first time that the voyage from Greenland to Norway was accomplished without going by way of Iceland, and was a remarkable achievement. The aim was evidently to avoid the dangerous passage between Greenland and Iceland.

² A reference to some strange happenings in the winter of 1000-1001 at the Icelandic farmstead Froda, as related in the Eyrbyggja Saga.

panions sailed away from the Hebrides, and arrived in Norway in the autumn.¹ Leif went to the court of King Olaf Tryggvason.² He was well received by the king, who felt that he could see that Leif was a man of great accomplishments. Upon one occasion the king came to speech with Leif, and asks him, "Is it thy purpose to sail to Greenland in the summer?" "It is my purpose," said Leif, "if it be your will." "I believe it will be well," answers the king, "and thither thou shalt go upon my errand, to proclaim Christianity there." Leif replied that the king should decide, but gave it as his belief that it would be difficult to carry this mission to a successful issue in Greenland. The king replied that he knew of no man who would be better fitted for this undertaking, "and in thy hands the cause will surely prosper." "This can only be," said Leif, "if I enjoy the grace of your protection." Leif put to sea when his ship was ready for the voyage. For a long time he was tossed about upon the ocean, and came upon lands of which he had previously had no knowledge. There were self-sown wheat³ fields and vines growing there. There were also those trees there which are called "mausur,"⁴ and of all these they took specimens. Some of the timbers were so large that they were used in building. Leif found men upon a wreck, and took them home with him, and procured quarters for them all during the winter. In this wise he showed

¹ Of the year 999. See next note.

² King Olaf ruled from 995 to 1000. He fell at the battle of Svolder (in the Baltic) in September, 1000. It was in the same year that Leif started out as the King's missionary to Greenland. See p. 43, note 1.

³ A wild cereal of some sort. Fiske is convinced that it was Indian corn, while Storm thinks it was wild rice, contending with much force that Indian corn was a product entirely unknown to the explorers, and that they could not by any possibility have confused it with wheat, even if they had found it. There is, moreover, no indication in this saga that they found cultivated fields. Storm cites Sir William Alexander, *Encouragement to Colonies* (1624), who, in speaking of the products of Nova Scotia, refers, among other things, to "some eares of wheate, barley and rie growing there wild." He also cites Jacques Cartier, who, in 1534, found in New Brunswick "wild grain like rye, which looked as though it had been sowed and cultivated." See Reeves, p. 174, (50).

⁴ Supposed to be maple.

his nobleness and goodness, since he introduced Christianity into the country, and saved the men from the wreck; and he was called Leif the Lucky ever after. Leif landed in Ericsfirth, and then went home to Brattahlid; he was well received by every one. He soon proclaimed Christianity throughout the land, and the Catholic faith, and announced King Olaf Tryggvason's messages to the people, telling them how much excellence and how great glory accompanied this faith. Eric was slow in forming the determination to forsake his old belief, but Thiodhild¹ embraced the faith promptly, and caused a church to be built at some distance from the house. This building was called Thiodhild's Church, and there she and those persons who had accepted Christianity, and they were many, were wont to offer their prayers. Thiodhild would not have intercourse with Eric after that she had received the faith, whereat he was sorely vexed.

At this time there began to be much talk about a voyage of exploration to that country which Leif had discovered. The leader of this expedition was Thorstein Ericsson, who was a good man and an intelligent, and blessed with many friends. Eric was likewise invited to join them, for the men believed that his luck and foresight would be of great furtherance. He was slow in deciding, but did not say nay, when his friends besought him to go. They thereupon equipped that ship in which Thorbiorn had come out, and twenty men were selected for the expedition. They took little cargo with them, nought else save their weapons and provisions. On that morning when Eric set out from his home he took with him a little chest containing gold and silver; he hid this treasure, and then went his way. He had proceeded but a short distance, however, when he fell from his horse and broke his ribs and dislocated his shoulder, whereat he cried "Ai, ai!" By reason of this accident he sent his wife word that she should procure the treasure which he had concealed, for to the hiding of the treasure he attributed his misfortune. Thereafter they sailed cheerily out of Ericsfirth in high spirits over their plan. They

¹ Also called Thorhild.

were long tossed about upon the ocean, and could not lay the course they wished. They came in sight of Iceland, and likewise saw birds from the Irish coast.¹ Their ship was, in sooth, driven hither and thither over the sea. In the autumn they turned back, worn out by toil, and exposure to the elements, and exhausted by their labors, and arrived at Ericsfirth at the very beginning of winter. Then said Eric, "More cheerful were we in the summer, when we put out of the firth, but we still live, and it might have been much worse." Thorstein answers, "It will be a princely deed to endeavor to look well after the wants of all these men who are now in need, and to make provision for them during the winter." Eric answers, "It is ever true, as it is said, that 'it is never clear ere the answer comes,' and so it must be here. We will act now upon thy counsel in this matter." All of the men, who were not otherwise provided for, accompanied the father and son. They landed thereupon, and went home to Brattahlid, where they remained throughout the winter.

Thorstein Ericsson weds Gudrid; Apparitions. — Now it is to be told that Thorstein Ericsson sought Gudrid, Thorbiorn's daughter, in wedlock. His suit was favorably received both by herself and by her father, and it was decided that Thorstein should marry Gudrid, and the wedding was held at Brattahlid in the autumn. The entertainment sped well, and was very numerously attended. Thorstein had a home in the Western Settlement at a certain farmstead, which is called Lysufirth. A half interest in this property belonged to a man named Thorstein, whose wife's name was Sigrid. Thorstein went to Lysufirth, in the autumn, to his namesake, and Gudrid bore him company. They were well received, and remained there during the winter. It came to pass that sickness appeared in their home early in the winter. Gard was the name of the overseer there; he had few friends; he fell sick first, and died. It was not long before one after another fell sick and died. Then Thorstein, Eric's son, fell sick, and Sigrid, the wife of Thorstein, his namesake; and one even-

¹ That is, were near Ireland.

ing Sigrid wished to go to the house, which stood over against the outer-door, and Gudrid accompanied her; they were facing the outer-door when Sigrid uttered a loud cry. "We have acted thoughtlessly," exclaimed Gudrid, "yet thou needest not cry, though the cold strikes thee; let us go in again as speedily as possible." Sigrid answers, "This may not be in this present plight. All of the dead folk are drawn up here before the door now; among them I see thy husband, Thorstein, and I can see myself there, and it is distressful to look upon." But directly this had passed she exclaimed, "Let us go now, Gudrid; I no longer see the band!" The overseer had vanished from her sight, whereas it had seemed to her before that he stood with a whip in his hand and made as if he would scourge the flock. So they went in, and ere the morning came she was dead, and a coffin was made ready for the corpse; and that same day the men planned to row out to fish, and Thorstein accompanied them to the landing-place, and in the twilight he went down to see their catch. Thorstein, Eric's son, then sent word to his namesake that he should come to him, saying that all was not as it should be there, for the housewife was endeavoring to rise to her feet, and wished to get in under the clothes beside him, and when he entered the room she was come up on the edge of the bed. He thereupon seized her hands and held a pole-axe¹ before her breast. Thorstein, Eric's son, died before night-fall. Thorstein, the master of the house, bade Gudrid lie down and sleep, saying that he would keep watch over the bodies during the night; thus she did, and early in the night, Thorstein, Eric's son, sat up and spoke saying that he desired Gudrid to be called thither, for that it was his wish to speak to her: "It is God's will that this hour be given me for my own and for the betterment of my condition." Thorstein, the master, went in search of Gudrid, and waked her, and bade her cross herself, and pray God to help her; "Thorstein, Eric's son, has said to me that he wishes to see thee; thou must take counsel with thyself now, what thou

¹ The display of an axe seems to have been thought efficacious in laying fetches. See Reeves, p. 171, (39), citing a passage from another saga.

wilt do, for I have no advice to give thee." She replies, "It may be that this is intended to be one of those incidents which shall afterward be held in remembrance, this strange event, and it is my trust that God will keep watch over me; wherefore, under God's mercy, I shall venture to him and learn what it is that he would say, for I may not escape this if it be designed to bring me harm. I will do this, lest he go further, for it is my belief that the matter is a grave one." So Gudrid went and drew near to Thorstein, and he seemed to her to be weeping. He spoke a few words in her ear, in a low tone, so that she alone could hear them; but this he said so that all could hear, that those persons would be blessed who kept well the faith, and that it carried with it all help and consolation, and yet many there were, said he, who kept it but ill. "This is no proper usage which has obtained here in Greenland since Christianity was introduced here, to inter men in unconsecrated earth, with nought but a brief funeral service. It is my wish that I be conveyed to the church, together with the others who have died here; Gard, however, I would have you burn upon a pyre, as speedily as possible, since he has been the cause of all of the apparitions which have been seen here during the winter." He spoke to her also of her own destiny, and said that she had a notable future in store for her, but he bade her beware of marrying any Greenlander; he directed her also to give their property to the church and to the poor, and then sank down again a second time. It had been the custom in Greenland, after Christianity was introduced there, to bury persons on the farmsteads where they died, in unconsecrated earth; a pole was erected in the ground, touching the breast of the dead, and subsequently, when the priests came thither, the pole was withdrawn and holy water poured in [the orifice], and the funeral service held there, although it might be long thereafter. The bodies of the dead were conveyed to the church at Ericsfirth, and the funeral services held there by the clergy. Thorbiorn died soon after this, and all of his property then passed into Gudrid's possession. Eric took her to his home and carefully looked after her affairs.

Concerning Thord of Höfdi. — There was a man named Thord, who lived at Höfdi on Höfdi-strands. He married Fridgerd, daughter of Thori the Loiterer and Fridgerd, daughter of Kiarval the King of the Irish. Thord was a son of Biorn Chestbutter, son of Thorvald Spine, Asleik's son, the son of Biorn Iron-side, the son of Ragnar Shaggy-breeks. They had a son named Snorri. He married Thorhild Ptarmigan, daughter of Thord the Yeller. Their son was Thord Horse-head. Thorfinn Karlsefni¹ was the name of Thord's son. Thorfinn's mother's name was Thorunn. Thorfinn was engaged in trading voyages, and was reputed to be a successful merchant. One summer Karlsefni equipped his ship, with the intention of sailing to Greenland. Snorri, Thorbrand's son, of Alptafirth accompanied him, and there were forty men on board the ship with them. There was a man named Biarni, Grimolf's son, a man from Breidafirth, and another named Thorhall, Gamli's son, an East-firth man. They equipped their ship, the same summer as Karlsefni, with the intention of making a voyage to Greenland; they had also forty men in their ship. When they were ready to sail, the two ships put to sea together. It has not been recorded how long a voyage they had; but it is to be told, that both of the ships arrived at Ericsfirth in the autumn. Eric and other of the inhabitants of the country rode to the ships, and a goodly trade was soon established between them. Gudrid was requested by the skippers to take such of their wares as she wished, while Eric, on his part, showed great munificence in return, in that he extended an invitation to both crews to accompany him home for winter quarters at Brattahlid. The merchants accepted this invitation, and went with Eric. Their wares were then conveyed to Brattahlid; nor was there lack there of good and commodious store-houses, in which to keep them; nor was there wanting much of that, which they needed, and the merchants were well pleased with their entertainment at Eric's

¹ Thorfinn Karlsefni, the explorer of the Vinland expeditions, was of excellent family. His lineage is given at greater length in the *Landnámabók* (Book of Settlements).

home during that winter. Now as it drew toward Yule, Eric became very taciturn, and less cheerful than had been his wont. On one occasion Karlsefni entered into conversation with Eric, and said: "Hast thou aught weighing upon thee, Eric? The folk have remarked, that thou art somewhat more silent than thou hast been hitherto. Thou hast entertained us with great liberality, and it behooves us to make such return as may lie within our power. Do thou now but make known the cause of thy melancholy." Eric answers: "Ye accept hospitality gracefully, and in manly wise, and I am not pleased that ye should be the sufferers by reason of our intercourse; rather am I troubled at the thought, that it should be given out elsewhere, that ye have never passed a worse Yule than this, now drawing nigh, when Eric the Red was your host at Brattahlid in Greenland." "There shall be no cause for that," replies Karlsefni, "we have malt, and meal, and corn in our ships, and you are welcome to take of these whatsoever you wish, and to provide as liberal an entertainment as seems fitting to you." Eric accepts this offer, and preparations were made for the Yule feast, and it was so sumptuous, that it seemed to the people they had scarcely ever seen so grand an entertainment before. And after Yule, Karlsefni broached the subject of a marriage with Gudrid to Eric, for he assumed that with him rested the right to bestow her hand in marriage. Eric answers favorably, and says, that she would accomplish the fate in store for her, adding that he had heard only good reports of him. And, not to prolong this, the result was, that Thorfinn was betrothed to Thurid,¹ and the banquet was augmented, and their wedding was celebrated; and this befell at Brattahlid during the winter.

Beginning of the Wineland Voyages. — About this time there began to be much talk at Brattahlid, to the effect that Wineland the Good should be explored, for, it was said, that country must be possessed of many goodly qualities. And so it came to pass, that Karlsefni and Snorri fitted out their ship, for the purpose of going in search of that country in the spring. Biarni

¹ Usually called Gudrid.

and Thorhall joined the expedition with their ship, and the men who had borne them company. There was a man named Thorvard; he was wedded to Freydis, a natural daughter of Eric the Red. He also accompanied them, together with Thorvald, Eric's son, and Thorhall, who was called the Huntsman. He had been for a long time with Eric as his hunter and fisherman during the summer, and as his steward during the winter. Thorhall was stout and swarthy, and of giant stature; he was a man of few words, though given to abusive language, when he did speak, and he ever incited Eric to evil. He was a poor Christian; he had a wide knowledge of the unsettled regions. He was on the same ship with Thorvard and Thorvald. They had that ship which Thorbiorn had brought out. They had in all one hundred and sixty men, when they sailed to the Western Settlement,¹ and thence to Bear Island. Thence they bore away to the southward two "dægr."² Then they saw land, and launched a boat, and explored the land, and found there large flat stones [*hellur*], and many of these were twelve ells wide; there were many Arctic foxes there. They gave a name to the country, and called it Helluland [the land of flat stones]. Then they sailed with northerly winds two "dægr," and land then lay before them, and upon it was a great wood and many wild beasts; an island lay off the land to the south-east, and there they found a bear, and they called this Biarney [Bear Island], while the land where the wood was they called Markland [Forest-land]. Thence they sailed southward along the land for a long time, and came to a cape; the land lay upon the starboard; there were long strands and sandy banks there. They rowed to the land and found upon the cape there the

¹ There is doubt as to why the expedition sailed northwest to the Western Settlement. Possibly Thorfinn desired to make a different start than Thorstein, whose expedition was a failure. See Reeves, p. 172, (45).

² *Dægr* was a period of twelve hours. Reeves quotes the following from an old Icelandic work: "In the day there are two *dægr*; in the *dægr* twelve hours." A *dægr*'s sailing is estimated to have been about one hundred miles. There is evidently a clerical error in this passage after the number of days' sailing. The words for "two" and "seven" are very similar in old Norse.

keel of a ship, and they called it there Kialarnes [Keelness]; they also called the strands Furdustrandir [Wonder-strands], because they were so long to sail by.¹ Then the country became indented with bays, and they steered their ships into a bay. It was when Leif was with King Olaf Tryggvason, and he bade him proclaim Christianity to Greenland, that the king gave him two Gaels; the man's name was Haki, and the woman's Haekia. The king advised Leif to have recourse to these people, if he should stand in need of fleetness, for they were swifter than deer. Eric and Leif had tendered Karlsefni the services of this couple. Now when they had sailed past Wonder-strands, they put the Gaels ashore, and directed them to run to the southward, and investigate the nature of the country, and return again before the end of the third half-day. They were each clad in a garment, which they called "kiafal,"² which was so fashioned, that it had a hood at the top, was open at the sides, was sleeveless, and was fastened between the legs with buttons and loops, while elsewhere they were naked. Karlsefni and his companions cast anchor, and lay there during their absence; and when they came again, one of them carried a bunch of grapes, and the other an ear of new-sown wheat. They went on board the ship, whereupon Karlsefni and his followers held on their way, until they came to where the coast was indented with bays. They stood into a bay with their ships. There was an island out at the mouth of the bay, about which there were strong currents, wherefore they called it Straumey [Stream Isle]. There were so many birds³ there, that it was scarcely possible to step between

¹ The language of the vellum AM. 557 is somewhat different in this and the previous sentence. It does not say that "they sailed southward along the land for a long time, and came to a cape," but, "when two *dægr* had elapsed, they descried land, and they sailed off this land; there was a cape to which they came. They beat into the wind along this coast, having the land upon the starboard side. This was a bleak coast, with long and sandy shores. They went ashore in boats, and found the keel of a ship, so they called it Keelness there; they likewise gave a name to the strands and called them Wonderstrands, because they were long to sail by."

² AM. 557 says *biajal*. Neither word has been identified.

³ Hauk's Book says "eider-ducks."

the eggs. They sailed through the firth, and called it Straumfiord [Streamfirth], and carried their cargoes ashore from the ships, and established themselves there. They had brought with them all kinds of live-stock. It was a fine country there. There were mountains thereabouts. They occupied themselves exclusively with the exploration of the country. They remained there during the winter, and they had taken no thought for this during the summer. The fishing began to fail, and they began to fall short of food. Then Thorhall the Huntsman disappeared. They had already prayed to God for food, but it did not come as promptly as their necessities seemed to demand. They searched for Thorhall for three half-days, and found him on a projecting crag. He was lying there, and looking up at the sky, with mouth and nostrils agape, and mumbling something. They asked him why he had gone thither; he replied, that this did not concern any one. They asked him then to go home with them, and he did so. Soon after this a whale appeared there, and they captured it, and flensed it, and no one could tell what manner of whale it was; and when the cooks had prepared it, they ate of it, and were all made ill by it. Then Thorhall, approaching them, says: "Did not the Red-beard¹ prove more helpful than your Christ? This is my reward for the verses which I composed to Thor, the Trustworthy; seldom has he failed me." When the people heard this, they cast the whale down into the sea, and made their appeals to God. The weather then improved, and they could now row out to fish, and thenceforward they had no lack of provisions, for they could hunt game on the land, gather eggs on the island, and catch fish from the sea.

Concerning Karlsefni and Thorhall. — It is said, that Thorhall wished to sail to the northward beyond Wonder-strands, in search of Wineland, while Karlsefni desired to proceed to the southward, off the coast. Thorhall prepared for his voyage out below the island, having only nine men in his party, for all of the remainder of the company went with Karlsefni.

¹ The god Thor.

And one day when Thorhall was carrying water aboard his ship, and was drinking, he recited this ditty:¹

When I came, these brave men told me,
Here the best of drink I'd get,
Now with water-pail behold me, —
Wine and I are strangers yet.
Stooping at the spring, I've tested
All the wine this land affords;
Of its vaunted charms divested,
Poor indeed are its rewards.

And when they were ready, they hoisted sail; whereupon Thorhall recited this ditty:²

Comrades, let us now be faring
Homeward to our own again!
Let us try the sea-steed's daring,
Give the chafing courser rein.
Those who will may bide in quiet,
Let them praise their chosen land,
Feasting on a whale-steak diet,
In their home by Wonder-strand.

Then they sailed away to the northward past Wonder-strands and Keelness, intending to cruise to the westward around the cape. They encountered westerly gales, and were driven ashore in Ireland,³ where they were grievously maltreated and thrown into slavery. There Thorhall lost his life, according to that which traders have related.

It is now to be told of Karlsefni, that he cruised southward off the coast, with Snorri and Biarni, and their people. They

¹ The prose sense is: "Men promised me, when I came hither, that I should have the best of drink; it behooves me before all to blame the land. See, oh, man! how I must raise the pail; instead of drinking wine, I have to stoop to the spring" (Reeves).

² The prose sense is: "Let us return to our countrymen, leaving those who like the country here, to cook their whale on Wonder-strand." From an archaic form in these lines it is apparent that they are older than either of the vellums, and must have been composed at least a century before Hauk's Book was written; they may well be much older than the beginning of the thirteenth century (Reeves). The antiquity of the verses of the saga is also attested by a certain metrical irregularity, as in poetry of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh centuries (Storm).

³ In the next sentence the authority for this doubtful statement seems to be placed upon "traders."

sailed for a long time, and until they came at last to a river, which flowed down from the land into a lake, and so into the sea. There were great bars at the mouth of the river, so that it could only be entered at the height of the flood-tide. Karlsefni and his men sailed into the mouth of the river, and called it there Hop [a small land-locked bay]. They found self-sown wheat-fields on the land there, wherever there were hollows, and wherever there was hilly ground, there were vines.¹ Every brook there was full of fish. They dug pits, on the shore where the tide rose highest, and when the tide fell, there were halibut in the pits. There were great numbers of wild animals of all kinds in the woods. They remained there half a month, and enjoyed themselves, and kept no watch. They had their live-stock with them. Now one morning early, when they looked about them, they saw a great number of skin-canoes,² and staves were brandished from the boats, with a noise like flails, and they were revolved in the same direction in which the sun moves. Then said Karlsefni: "What may this betoken?" Snorri, Thorbrand's son, answers him: "It may be, that this is a signal of peace, wherefore let us take a white shield and display it." And thus they did. Thereupon the strangers rowed toward them, and went upon the land, marvelling at those whom they saw before them. They were swarthy men,³ and ill-looking, and the hair of their heads was ugly. They had great eyes,⁴ and were broad of cheek.

¹ Note the word "hollows" with reference to the contention that "wild wheat" is "wild rice." See p. 25, note 3.

² "Skin-canoes," or kayaks, lead one to think of Eskimos. Both Storm and Fiske think that the authorities of the saga-writer may have failed to distinguish between bark-canoes and skin-canoes.

³ The vellum AM. 557 says "small men" instead of "swarthy men." The explorers called them *Skrælingar*, a disparaging epithet, meaning inferior people, *i.e.*, savages. The name is applied, in saga literature, to the natives of Greenland as well as to the natives of Vinland. Storm thinks the latter were the Micmac Indians of Nova Scôtia.

⁴ "Lescarbot, in his minute and elaborate description of the Micmacs of Acadia, speaks with some emphasis of their large eyes. Dr. Storm quite reasonably suggests that the Norse expression may refer to the size not of the eyeball but of the eye-socket, which in the Indian face is apt to be large." Fiske, *The Discovery of America*, p. 190.

They tarried there for a time looking curiously at the people they saw before them, and then rowed away, and to the southward around the point.

Karlsefni and his followers had built their huts above the lake, some of their dwellings being near the lake, and others farther away. Now they remained there that winter. No snow came there, and all of their live-stock lived by grazing.¹ And when spring opened, they discovered, early one morning, a great number of skin-canoes, rowing from the south past the cape, so numerous, that it looked as if coals had been scattered broadcast out before the bay; and on every boat staves were waved. Thereupon Karlsefni and his people displayed their shields, and when they came together, they began to barter with each other. Especially did the strangers wish to buy red cloth, for which they offered in exchange peltries and quite gray skins. They also desired to buy swords and spears, but Karlsefni and Snorri forbade this. In exchange for perfect unsullied skins, the Skrellings would take red stuff a span in length, which they would bind around their heads. So their trade went on for a time, until Karlsefni and his people began to grow short of cloth, when they divided it into such narrow pieces, that it was not more than a finger's breadth wide, but the Skrellings still continued to give just as much for this as before, or more.

It so happened, that a bull,² which belonged to Karlsefni and his people, ran out from the woods, bellowing loudly. This so terrified the Skrellings, that they sped out to their canoes, and then rowed away to the southward along the coast. For three entire weeks nothing more was seen of them. At

¹ This would seem to place Vinland farther south than Nova Scotia, but not necessarily. Storm cites the Frenchman Denys, who as colonist and governor of Nova Scotia passed a number of years there, and in a work published in 1672 says of the inner tracts of the land east of Port Royal that "there is very little snow in the country, and very little winter." He adds: "It is certain that the country produces the vine naturally, — that it bears a grape that ripens perfectly, the berry as large as the muscat."

² An animal unknown to the natives. As Fiske suggests, "It is the unknown that frightens."

the end of this time, however, a great multitude of Skrelling boats was discovered approaching from the south, as if a stream were pouring down, and all of their staves were waved in a direction contrary to the course of the sun, and the Skrellings were all uttering loud cries. Thereupon Karlsefni and his men took red shields and displayed them. The Skrellings sprang from their boats, and they met then, and fought together. There was a fierce shower of missiles, for the Skrellings had war-slings. Karlsefni and Snorri observed, that the Skrellings raised up on a pole a great ball-shaped body, almost the size of a sheep's belly, and nearly black in color, and this they hurled from the pole up on the land above Karlsefni's followers, and it made a frightful noise, where it fell. Whereat a great fear seized upon Karlsefni, and all his men, so that they could think of nought but flight, and of making their escape up along the river bank, for it seemed to them, that the troop of the Skrellings was rushing towards them from every side, and they did not pause, until they came to certain jutting crags, where they offered a stout resistance. Freydis came out, and seeing that Karlsefni and his men were fleeing, she cried: "Why do ye flee from these wretches, such worthy men as ye, when, meseems, ye might slaughter them like cattle. Had I but a weapon, methinks, I would fight better than any one of you!" They gave no heed to her words. Freydis sought to join them, but lagged behind, for she was not hale;¹ she followed them, however, into the forest, while the Skrellings pursued her; she found a dead man in front of her; this was Thorbrand, Snorri's son, his skull cleft by a flat stone; his naked sword lay beside him; she took it up, and prepared to defend herself with it. The Skrellings then approached her, whereupon she stripped down her shift, and slapped her breast with the naked sword. At this the Skrellings were terrified and ran down to their boats, and rowed away. Karlsefni and his companions, however, joined her and praised her valor. Two of Karlsefni's men had fallen, and a great number of the Skrellings. Karlsefni's party had been overpowered by dint

¹ A euphemism for pregnant; the original is *eigi heil*.

of superior numbers. They now returned to their dwellings, and bound up their wounds, and weighed carefully what throng of men that could have been, which had seemed to descend upon them from the land; it now seemed to them, that there could have been but the one party, that which came from the boats, and that the other troop must have been an ocular delusion. The Skrellings, moreover, found a dead man, and an axe lay beside him. One of their number picked up the axe, and struck at a tree with it, and one after another [they tested it], and it seemed to them to be a treasure, and to cut well; then one of their number seized it, and hewed at a stone with it, so that the axe broke, whereat they concluded that it could be of no use, since it would not withstand stone, and they cast it away.

It now seemed clear to Karlsefni and his people, that although the country thereabouts was attractive, their life would be one of constant dread and turmoil by reason of the [hostility of the] inhabitants of the country, so they forthwith prepared to leave, and determined to return to their own country. They sailed to the northward off the coast, and found five Skrellings, clad in skin-doublets, lying asleep near the sea. There were vessels beside them, containing animal marrow, mixed with blood. Karlsefni and his company concluded that they must have been banished from their own land. They put them to death. They afterwards found a cape, upon which there was a great number of animals, and this cape looked as if it were one cake of dung, by reason of the animals which lay there at night. They now arrived again at Streamfirth, where they found great abundance of all those things of which they stood in need. Some men say, that Biarni and Freydis remained behind here with a hundred men, and went no further; while Karlsefni and Snorri proceeded to the southward with forty men, tarrying at Hop barely two months, and returning again the same summer. Karlsefni then set out with one ship, in search of Thorhall the Huntsman, but the greater part of the company remained behind. They sailed to the northward around Keelness, and then bore to the westward,

having land to the larboard.¹ The country there was a wooded wilderness, as far as they could see, with scarcely an open space; and when they had journeyed a considerable distance, a river flowed down from the east toward the west. They sailed into the mouth of the river, and lay to by the southern bank.

The Slaying of Thorvald, Eric's son. — It happened one morning, that Karlsefni and his companions discovered in an open space in the woods above them, a speck, which seemed to shine toward them, and they shouted at it: it stirred, and it was a Uniped,² who skipped down to the bank of the river by which they were lying. Thorvald, a son of Eric the Red, was sitting at the helm, and the Uniped shot an arrow into his inwards. Thorvald drew out the arrow, and exclaimed: "There is fat around my paunch; we have hit upon a fruitful country, and yet we are not like to get much profit of it." Thorvald died soon after from this wound. Then the Uniped ran away back toward the north. Karlsefni and his men pursued him, and saw him from time to time. The last they saw of him, he ran down into a creek. Then they turned back; whereupon one of the men recited this ditty:³

Eager, our men, up hill down dell,
Hunted a Uniped;
Hearken, Karlsefni, while they tell
How swift the quarry fled!

Then they sailed away back toward the north, and believed they had got sight of the land of the Unipeds; nor were they disposed to risk the lives of their men any longer. They concluded that the mountains of Hop, and those which they had

¹ Thus reaching the western coast of Cape Breton Island and Nova Scotia, according to Storm.

² The Norse word is *Ein-fætingr*, one-footer. The mediaeval belief in a country in which there lived a race of unipeds was not unknown in Iceland. It has been suggested by Vigfusson that Thorvald being an important personage, his death must be adorned in some way. It is a singular fact that Jacques Cartier brought back from his Canadian explorations reports of a land peopled by a race of one-legged folk. See Reeves, *The Finding of Wineland*, p. 177, (56).

³ The literal translation is: "The men drove, it is quite true, a one-footer down to the shore. The strange man ran hard over the banks. Hearken, Karlsefni!"

now found, formed one chain, and this appeared to be so because they were about an equal distance removed from Streamfirth, in either direction.¹ They sailed back, and passed the third winter at Streamfirth. Then the men began to divide into factions, of which the women were the cause; and those who were without wives, endeavored to seize upon the wives of those who were married, whence the greatest trouble arose. Snorri, Karlsefni's son, was born the first autumn, and he was three winters old when they took their departure. When they sailed away from Wineland, they had a southerly wind, and so came upon Markland, where they found five Skrellings,² of whom one was bearded, two were women, and two were children. Karlsefni and his people took the boys, but the others escaped, and these Skrellings sank down into the earth. They bore the lads away with them, and taught them to speak, and they were baptized. They said, that their mother's name was Vætildi, and their father's Uvægi. They said, that kings governed the Skrellings, one of whom was called Avalldamon, and the other Valldidida.³ They stated, that there were no houses there, and that the people lived in caves or holes. They said, that there was a land on the other side over against their country, which was inhabited by people who wore white garments, and yelled loudly, and carried poles before them, to

¹ As skilled mariners the explorers were undoubtedly competent to make such a deduction as this. If Storm and Dieserud are correct, the explorers saw from the north coast of Nova Scotia the same mountains that they had seen from the south coast.

² The Beothuk Indians of Newfoundland, according to Storm.

³ Nothing can with certainty be extracted from these names. The chances that they were incorrectly recorded are of course great. Storm contends that they cannot be Eskimo. Captain Holm of the Danish navy, an authority on the Eskimos, says, "It is not *impossible* that the names may have been derived from Eskimo originals." Fiske says, p. 189, note: "There is not the slightest reason for supposing that there were any Eskimos south of Labrador so late as nine hundred years ago." In this connection Captain Holm says: "It appears to me not sufficiently proven that the now extinct race on America's east coast, the Beothuk, were Indians. I wish to direct attention to the possibility that in the Beothuk we may perhaps have one of the transition links between the Indians and the Eskimo." See Reeves, p. 177, (57).

which rags were attached;¹ and people believe that this must have been Hvitramanna-land [White-men's-land], or Ireland the Great.² Now they arrived in Greenland, and remained during the winter with Eric the Red.

Biarni, Grimolf's son, and his companions were driven out into the Atlantic,³ and came into a sea, which was filled with worms, and their ship began to sink beneath them. They had a boat, which had been coated with seal-tar; this the sea-worm does not penetrate. They took their places in this boat, and then discovered that it would not hold them all. Then said Biarni: "Since the boat will not hold more than half of our men, it is my advice, that the men who are to go in the boat, be chosen by lot, for this selection must not be made according to rank." This seemed to them all such a manly offer, that no one opposed it. So they adopted this plan, the men casting lots; and it fell to Biarni to go in the boat, and half of the men with him, for it would not hold more. But when the men were come into the boat, an Icelfander, who was in the ship, and who had accompanied Biarni from Iceland, said: "Dost thou intend, Biarni, to forsake me here?" "It must be even so," answers Biarni. "Not such was the promise thou gavest my father," he answers, "when I left Iceland with thee, that thou wouldst thus part with me, when thou saidst, that we should both share the same fate." "So be it, it shall not rest thus," answers Biarni; "do thou come hither, and I will go to the ship, for I see that thou art eager for life." Biarni thereupon boarded the ship, and this man entered the boat, and they went their way, until they came to Dublin in Ireland, and there they told this tale; now it is the belief of most peo-

¹ The description is clearly suggestive of processions of Christian priests, in white vestments, with banners, and singing (Storm).

² Vellum AM. 557 has not the words "Ireland the Great." As to "White-men's-land" (mentioned also once in the *Landnama-bok*), Storm traces its quasi-historical origin to the Irish visitation of Iceland prior to the Norse settlement. See *Studies on the Vineland Voyages*, p. 61. The explanation is, however, hardly convincing. See *Origines Islandicae*, Vol. II., p. 625.

³ AM. 557 says "Iceland's sea" (*i.e.*, between Iceland and Markland), and Hauk's Book, "Greenland's sea" (*i.e.*, between Iceland and Greenland).

ple, that Biarni and his companions perished in the maggot-sea, for they were never heard of afterward.

Karlsefni and his Wife Thurid's Issue.—The following summer Karlsefni sailed to Iceland and Gudrid with him, and he went home to Reyniness. His mother believed that he had made a poor match, and she was not at home the first winter. However, when she became convinced that Gudrid was a very superior woman, she returned to her home, and they lived happily together. Hallfrid was a daughter of Snorri, Karlsefni's son, she was the mother of Bishop Thorlak,¹ Runolf's son. They had a son named Thorbiorn, whose daughter's name was Thorunn, [she was] Bishop Biorn's ² mother. Thorgeir was the name of a son of Snorri, Karlsefni's son, [he was] the father of Ingveld, mother of Bishop Brand the Elder. Steinunn was a daughter of Snorri, Karlsefni's son, who married Einar, a son of Grundar-Ketil, a son of Thorvald Crook, a son of Thori of Espihol. Their son was Thorstein the Unjust, he was the father of Gudrun, who married Jorund of Keldur. Their daughter was Halla, the mother of Flosi, the father of

¹ Thorlak was born in 1085, consecrated bishop in 1118, and died Feb. 1, 1133. These dates are definitely known, and are important. "The bishop's birth-year being certainly known, one can reckon back, and according to the regular allowances, we shall have Hallfrid born about 1060, and her father about 1030, in Vinland, and Karlsefni as far back as 1000." Vigfusson in *Origines Islandicae*, Vol. II., p. 592. Vigfusson seeks to corroborate the above by other allied lineages. If his deductions are correct, they are revolutionary with reference to the generally accepted chronology of the Vinland voyages. He is convinced that Leif belongs to an older generation than Karlsefni and his wife, and that Leif's declining years coincide with Karlsefni's appearance on the scene. The expeditions would then stand in the year 1025-1035, or 1030-1040, while Leif may have headed the first expedition, say in 1025. And he thinks that various things outside of the genealogies point to this. See Introduction, p. 12, of this volume.

² Biorn was consecrated bishop in 1147, and died in 1162. His successor was Bishop Brand "the Elder," who died in 1201. Both Hauk's Book and AM. 557 refer to him as "the Elder"; hence the originals could not have been written before the accession of the second bishop Brand, which was in 1263. He died the following year. AM. 557 concludes with the words "Bishop Brand the Elder." But in Hauk's Book the genealogical information is carried down to Hauk's own time. He was a descendant of Karlsefni and Gudrid, through Snorri, born in Vinland.

Valgerd, the mother of Herra Erlend the Stout, the father of Herra Hauk the Lawman. Another daughter of Flosi was Thordis, the mother of Fru Ingigerd the Mighty. Her daughter was Fru Hallbera, Abbess of Reyniness at Stad. Many other great people in Iceland are descended from Karlsefni and Thurid, who are not mentioned here. God be with us, Amen !