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DYNGJA : OR, WOMEN'S BOWER IN THE NORTH.

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In describing the manner in which the Germans built their houses and arranged the laying out of their villages in the first century of our era, Tacitus gives us the following information :

The Germans, it is well known, do not live in cities; nor will they have anything to do with houses joined in a row. They dwell apart and sundered, according as a spring of water, a meadow, a grove take their fancy. They set up villages, but not in our fashion with buildings connected and joined together; every one surrounds his house with an open space, either for the purpose of guarding against accidents by fire, or because of want of skill in house-building. Even of quarry-stone and roof-tiles no use is made among them. They utilise unshaped timber for all purposes regardless of neatness and pleasing appearance. Certain parts they bedaub carefully with earth so pure and shining as to resemble painting and drawing in colours. They commonly dig out underground dens and heap on the top of them a quantity of dung; these dens serve as retreats in winter and as store-houses for field-produce; for by means of these places they soften the severity of the cold, and if ever an enemy arrives, he plunders the open country, but of goods hidden or buried he either knows nothing, or they elude him for the very reason that they have to be searched for¹.

These underground habitations of the Old Germans are of special interest when an attempt is to be made at tracing the broken history of that ancient habitation known in the North as *dyngja*. Tacitus, we see, knows these German earth-houses as retreats for people from the cold of the winter and as stores for grain. But his account is lacking in detail. People could

¹ Tacitus' *Germania*, ch. xvi. :—Nullas Germanorum populis urbes habitari satis notum est, ne pati quidem inter se junctas sedes. Colunt discreti ac diversi, ut fons, ut campus, ut nemus placuit. Vicos locant non in nostrum morem conexas et cohaerentibus aedificiis: suam quisque domum spatio circumdat, sive adversus casus ignis remedium sive inscitia aedificandi. Ne caementorum quidem apud illos aut tegularum usus: materia ad omnia utuntur infirmi et citra speciem et delectationem. Quaedam loca illinunt terra ita pura ac splendente, ut picturam ac lineamenta colorum imitetur. Solent et subterraneos specus aperire eosque multo insuper fimo onerant, suffugium hiemis et receptaculum frugibus, quia rigorem frigorum ejus modi locis molliunt, et si quando hostis advenit, aperta populatur, abdita autem et defossa aut ignorantur aut eo ipso fallunt, quod quaerenda sunt.

not have retired to these dens merely in order to keep themselves warm. They must have retired to them also for the purpose of doing work there. We may take it for granted that these dens were the hives of German home-industry during the winter season. That such was, indeed, the case, we learn from Tacitus' contemporary and friend, Pliny the Elder. In describing the culture of flax he also refers to the art of weaving it, and says that the Germans perform that work in dug-out dens and under the earth¹. It goes without saying, that the dens thus referred to by Pliny as weavers' shops are the same underground buildings as those which Tacitus describes. That being the case, it follows that besides weaving, other home-industries such as spinning, knitting, sewing, etc., also occupied the inmates; but that was impossible unless means were adopted whereby light was admitted to these cavernous abodes. Strangely enough neither Pliny nor Tacitus think it worth while to mention this most important point. But we can see that the supply of light could only be effected by means of a hole through the top. These dens must have been dug out either in a level ground or in a hillock, and the digging must have begun where the door was intended to be. In the former case the doorway must have led by steps down to the floor of the chamber; in the latter the doorway probably ran in through the side of the hillock and led directly to the floor of the pit. In either case it is obvious that light sufficiently strong to enable people to engage in their industrial occupations in the day-time must have come from the top. That the inmates of these dens were under the necessity of lighting fires in them, especially for the purpose of cooking their food, must be regarded as a matter of course. And thus the same hole that served to admit light also did the service of emitting smoke, creating draught, and cleansing the atmosphere of the pit.

Neither Pliny nor Tacitus mention what name the Germans gave to these pit dwellings. But evidence as to that point from other sources is conclusive. The Latin word used by

¹ *Nat. Hist.* xix. 2 :—In Germania autem defossi atque sub terra id opus agunt.

Tacitus for the roof-covering is *fimus*, meaning dung in general. But German archæologists maintain that this *fimus* was a congeries of stall and stable scourings, with leaves, straw, and probably also earth and lime intermixed¹. The O.H.G. term for *fimus* was *tunga*, M.H.G. *tunge*, which corresponds with Mod. H.G. *dünger* and *dung*, identical with O. and Mod. Engl. *dung*. All, apparently, participial formations of a strong verb *ting*, *ding*, meaning to drop, throw, fling, cast.

Now we have seen that the Old High Germ. term for the substance which covered the top of these pit dwellings was *tunga*; but the Old Germans also had a name for the houses themselves, and that name, formed of the same root as *tunga*, was *tunc*², which originally must have meant the same thing. But what the term exactly meant, when applied to the houses, we learn from the manner in which the Lat. terms *textrina*, a weaver's shop, and *genecium* = *gynaeceum*, women's bower, are glossed in Old High German. The O.H.G. word for both is *tunc* or *tunch*, or *dung*, or *tung*. The name has maintained itself in certain parts of Germany even to this day. In Augsburg a weaver's cellar to this day is called a *dunk*. In Appenzell in Switzerland the weaving shops are underground abodes and are still called *dunk*. In Erfurt, according to Fedor Beck, *l.c.*, a cellar-like chamber goes by the name of *tunc*. An anonymous German annotator remarks on Beck's article in a pencilled note in our library copy of *Germania*: 'In Swabian we have to this day the word *weber-tunk* or *webers dunk*, which is really a cellar-like chamber where weavers work.' In Nürnberg there is a square called *Weber-platz* with many weavers' shops, which are to this day called *tung*. It would therefore seem as if the name *tunc* or *dunc* for such houses as Pliny and Tacitus describe was once upon a time common all over Germany.

Coming now to the North, we find there a term closely allied both in form and sense to the German *tunga*; in the

¹ Edu. Schwyzer, Tacitus, *Germania*, Halle, 1902, Ch. xvi. note 10.

² On *tung*, *tunc*, etc. see Wich. Wackernagel in *Haupts Zeitschr. für deutsches Alterthum*, vii. Bd. pp. 128—133. Fedor Beck, *Germania*, ix. Jahrg. 1864, p. 337.

literary period of the West Scandinavian languages this term has the form of *dyngja*¹. In this form we meet with it in a verse by a contemporary poet commemorative of events which chronologically link themselves to the year 870. This, however, cannot be the primitive form of the word. The *y* is not a primitive vowel in the Scandinavian languages, but represents a sound-mutation of a *u* caused by the attraction of *i* (*j*) in a syllable immediately following the *u*-syllable. There must, therefore, once upon a time have existed a form of the word with *u* in the stem instead of *y*. To the literary language such a form is unknown. But it lingers still in the dialects of Norway and Sweden:—"In the west and north of Norway *dunge* and *dungje* means 'a heap'; that it also implies a dung-heap is proved by the compounds *dunge-dyr*, 'back-door of sheep-pens (through which the dung is thrown out),' and *dunge-stad*, *dunge-stöde*, 'dung-stead,' 'place where a dung-heap has been lying'" (Aasen). In Swedish dialects we have *dunge*, 'heap of manure from sheep and goats'; the same word, with the stem-vowel attenuated, appears in the form of *dong*, *donge*, 'heap,' 'mass'; 'litter,' 'dung.' I may add to these the Faroese *dungi*, 'a heap.' The old type of these dialectic forms was *dung(i)a*, identical with the O.H.G. *tunga*. This Scandinavian *dungia* was borrowed, it would seem, at a very early age, by the Finnish language in the form of *tungio*, 'a heap' (Helenius), and *tunkio*, 'heap,' 'dung-heap,' 'dust-heap,' a word which has found its way even into the Finnish national epos Kalevala². If this Finnish loan was effected, as I have assumed, before *dungia* was mutated into *dyngja*, it is quite possible that it took place long before the close of the eighth century.

Out of the primitive *dungia* evolved the mutated forms we have in the literary languages of Scandinavia: Older Dan. *dyng*, 'manure,' 'dung'; Mod. Dan. *dyngje*, 'a heap'; O. Swed. *dyngia*, 'heap,' 'dung-heap'; Mod. Swed. *dynga*, 'dung,' with an implied notion of 'heap'; Mod. Norwegian *dyngje*, 'heap.'

¹ References to the *dyngja* are collected by Dr Valtyr Guðmundsson in: *Privatboligen på Island i sagatiden*, København, 1889, pp. 244—245.

² V. Thomsen, *Den gotiske sprogklassens indflydelse på den finske*, adduces Kale-Vala 3, 281: *sonta-tunkio*, 'acervus purgamentorum, fimetum,' and 17, 340: *rikka-tunkio* 'acervus quisquiliarum,' p. 154.

In all these forms the sense of the word then centres about the notion 'heap.' But now, when we have to deal with Old Norwegian and Old Icelandic *dyngja*, the sense changes and becomes identical with O.H.G. *tunc* as a gloss of *gynaeceum* and *textrina*. Of this West Scandinavian sense of the term no trace seems to be found in Denmark or Sweden. But I should think it was rather due to a scantily preserved literature in these countries than to the fact that the *dyngja*-type of habitation was unknown to Danes and Swedes. Even in the case of Norway we should have no evidence to shew that ever a women's bower called *dyngja* had existed in that country, if the Icelandic authors of *Heimskringla*, *Egil's saga* and *Frithiof's saga* had not put the fact on record.

The earliest mention of *dyngja*, in the sense of women's bower, occurs in a poem by one of Harald Fairhair's court poets, named Thorbiorn Hornklofi, or Raven. Harald decided to spend the winter of 870-71 out at sea on board his war-galleys, and carried on military operations in the south-eastern-most territories of Norway against the encroaching movements of King Eric Eymundson of Sweden. It was contrary to viking custom to spend the winter season at sea, and in Harald's case the surprise of his people was unpleasantly enhanced by the consideration that there would be no Yule-drinking nor any display of the customary splendour of the festive season at court. The incident was thus commemorated by his above-named poet:

If our lord, the eagerminded,
Shall be left alone to rule it,
Out at sea he'll drink his Yule-ale,
Making Frey's game there his pastime.
Young he loathed the stuffy fire-side,
And the idle indoors sitting,
The warm *dyngja*, e'en as mittens
Done inside with downy lining¹.

Besides other things of interest, this verse teaches us that the *dyngja*, the women's bower, was *the* warm chamber at a

¹ Snorri Sturluson, *Haralds saga hárfagra*, Ch. xv. *Heimskringla* (ed. F. Jónsson), i. 120.

homestead, for *varma*, 'warm,' in the verse is an *epitheton constans*. We further learn the important fact that the *dyngja* was the *nursery*, where the viking race of the North was reared from childhood. This *dyngja* must have been located somewhere on Westfold, in the south of Norway, which was the hereditary portion of the kingdom of Fairhair's father, Halfdan the Black. In the ninth century, therefore, it was a chamber in fashion at royal residences in Norway. Another *dyngja* in Norway is mentioned during Fairhair's reign up in Naumdale, a folkland in the far north of the country, as belonging to the second-sighted foster-mother of one of Fairhair's barons, called Thorfinn the Strong. But no description of it is given¹. A third Norwegian *dyngja* is referred to at the manorial homestead of Aurland in Sognfirth, W. Norway, in connection with an event which happened in 898. Biorn, son of Bryniolf, who was the lord of the manor, 'went,' according to Egilssaga, 'into the *dyngja* which belonged to his mother. She sat within it and very many women with her. There, too, was Thora.' Biorn tells her to get ready to go away with him, and he and his men led her out, while his mother forbade the women 'to bruit the matter into the hall,' where with his men was the father of Biorn, who had forbidden his son to obtain the young lady by unlawful means². In this case we see that the *dyngja* was a chamber of considerable dimensions; also that there was an exit from it not leading through the hall, and lastly that the hall itself could not have been provided with side windows that afforded any view of passers-by outside. We have one more reference to the *dyngja* in Norway, in a verse in the saga of Frithiof the Bold. From that reference we learn that even temple priestesses had a *dyngja* of their own and were waited upon at meals by men³.

This completes the record of the *dyngja* in Norway. Historically speaking it only covers a period of 28 years (870—898). But it is quite safe to say that before 870 it had been in use for ages; and after 898 it must have continued for

¹ *Fornmannasögur*, III. 71.

² *Egilssaga Skallagrímssonar* (ed. F. Jónsson), Ch. xxxii. p. 104.

³ *Friðþjófs saga frækna*, Ch. 6, *Fornaldarsögur* II. 76.

some considerable time, for a building which is in fashion at a mighty magnate's homestead in a given year is not likely to fall into desuetude in a hurry.

I don't think we shall make any great mistake by assuming that the *dyngja* is that form of house which immigrants, destitute of mechanical aids, in early ages are forced by the necessities of their environment to provide themselves with as a first shelter from the rigours of a harsh climate.

When, now, we come to Icelandic sources the references to *dyngja* multiply considerably, and, though sparing of details, they afford some which are not obtainable elsewhere.—But first let us see where we are. We left the Norwegian *dyngja* when the freedom and independence-loving portion of the race of that country was taking its mighty plunge from it into the Atlantic for the long swim to the desolate but peaceful shores of Iceland. The fugitives from Harald's tyranny took with them the traditions of their mother-country and applied them for practical purposes in accordance with the dictates of the new environment. Let us look for a moment at the work that awaited a ship's crew of men, women, and children on landing with some live-stock on board. The voyage could not be undertaken until the atmospheric disturbances of the vernal equinox had passed by and the sea had begun to calm down. April was practically the first month in the year when the voyage could be ventured. Not until June had the ground thawed so as to permit building operations to be undertaken. These could be carried on for the five months, June till October, with manifold interruptions caused by rains, of which the summer-season in Iceland so frequently has an excessive supply. Fodder, in the shape of hay, and shelter for the winter, had to be provided during this time for what live-stock had survived the journey from Norway. Timber for house-building lay in heaps about the shore in the form of driftwood, and had to be brought to the place selected for a homestead by the master of the ship. In the absence of anything like a sufficient horse-power for draught purposes this must have been a very slow and very laborious process. Building-timber to any appreciable extent could not have been taken on board a ship

crowded with immigrants. During the first summer, in most cases, therefore, the shelters erected for the habitation of man must have been of a provisional character. The easiest to build, and the one most needed and most to the purpose, was no doubt the *dyngja*, and I take it that in all cases where no neighbours could be reached who could give shelter to the weaker portion of a newly landed band of colonists the *dyngja*-style of habitation was the first provided. This though not expressly stated in the *Landnáma-bók* must have been the case in many instances, even if it be allowed that overground shelters of turf and stone were also run up for the occasion, chiefly for the more robust part of the crew.

The fact that the earliest references to *dyngja* in Iceland relate to events which happened some thirty years after the close of the colonizing period (930), is not an evidence to shew that then this kind of habitation first came into vogue. On the contrary; it existed then as a survival from the land-taking period, and had before it, so far as historical record avails us, only a further run of some sixty years (958—1024). It gave way to better methods of house-building as the colonists got better off and more able to indulge in homely comforts.

The earliest mention made of a *dyngja* in Iceland occurs in the saga of *Cormak* the poet, in the following circumstances, c. 958:—*Cormak* came to a homestead called *Gnupsdale* where was brought up *Steingerd*, daughter of a certain *Thorkel* of *Tongue*, in *Midfirth*, in the north of Iceland. At the homestead 'there was a great hall and fires were made for men.' 'In the evening *Steingerd* went from her *dyngja* (*dyngju sinni*) and a handmaid with her to the hall to have a peep through the door of it at the men within¹.' From this statement it is clear that the *dyngja* from which *Steingerd* came was apart from the hall, but whether communication between the two was by a covered passage or not we are not told. The next morning *Cormak* went to the chamber called *Stofa*—the general sitting-room and guest chamber of a homestead—in quest of *Steingerd*; not finding her there, he listened and heard voices in an inner *stofa*, and turning that way he found there

¹ *Kormaks saga* (Th. Möbius, Halle, 1886), pp. 4—5.

Steingerd and a company of women round her¹. This 'inner *stofa*' must have been the same chamber which before is called *dyngja*, and must have been connected with the *stofa* by a very short passage, evidently under roof.

In the same saga, somewhat about the same time, the story tells how a certain magnate *Bersi*, bent on delivering a young woman named *Steinvor* from forcible detention at the house of *Thorarin* the *Strong* in *Thambardale*, within *Bitter-firth* in the north of Iceland, came to the place when the day was far spent, 'at the time when women were wont to leave the *dyngja*.' *Steinvor* comes out of the *dyngja* just as *Bersi* rides up to the homestead; and they arrange how to leave *Thorarin's* place together. But before returning on his homeward ride, *Bersi* goes to the door of the hall, 'when men sat by the long-fires,' declaring he had still business to settle with *Thorarin*, which he did by taking his life². Here the statement that women were wont to leave the *dyngja* when the day was far spent, coupled with the notice that at the time the men were already seated round the long-fires in the hall, seems to shew that it was the custom for the women to join the men in the hall when they had turned in for the night and the hall was already comfortably warmed up. We also learn from the above quotation that the way from the *dyngja* to the hall in this case led through the open, not through a covered passage.

In the saga of *Gisli Súrsson*—known to English readers from *Sir George W. Dasent's* translation as the story of *Gisli the Outlaw*—we meet, in connection with events that happened about 963, the statement that at *Gisli's* home, called the *Knoll*, his wife *Aud* and his sister-in-law *Asgerd* were wont to sit and sew in a *dyngja* out on the south side of the hall. *Thorkel*, the brother of *Gisli*, has been having a nap in the hall. But on waking he goes to the *dyngja* because he heard voices in that direction, and he lies down by it, and hears all the gossiping of the two women inside³. The situation seems to indicate that *Thorkel* must have heard the voices through the light-

¹ *Ib.* p. 7.

² *Ib.* p. 32.

³ *Tvæð sögur af Gísla Súrssyni* (Konr. Gíslason, 1849), pp. 15, 97.

hole in the top of the *dyngja* from which the *skjár* or hoop-formed window frame with a caul-membrane stretched over it had been removed. That this *dyngja* was separated from the other houses of the homestead seems probable.

In the *Reekdalers'* saga, ab. 970, we have a statement to the effect that a bride about to be married sat in her *dyngja* and many women with her, and that when the hour of the wedding ceremony came round she was sent for and asked to come in; that is to say, into the hall or *stofa* where the bridal party was assembled; which again shews that the *dyngja* was a separate chamber, though the question remains open whether it communicated with the hall or *stofa* by a covered passage or not¹. At the same or similar time a *dyngja* as habitation for women only is mentioned in the saga of Valla-Ljot².

In the story of *Burnt Nial* (*Njáls saga*, *Njála*) amidst events which happened A.D. 979 we read: '*Hallgerd* sat in a *dyngja*, for that was her habit. There was *Thorgerd* her daughter and *Thrain*; there too was *Sigmund* and a number of women. Some gangrel women who were tramping the neighbourhood walked into the *dyngja*. *Hallgerd* greeted them and bade them be seated³.' This description of the *dyngja* at the manor of *Lithend* shews that at well-to-do homesteads it could assume considerable dimensions. As in the case of the *dyngja* at *Gisli's* house this one must have been built so that voices from within could be easily heard outside, for *Gunnar*, *Hallgerd's* husband, standing outside it, heard all that was said inside, which would be naturally accounted for if the *dyngja* was a round and dome-roofed habitation with an opening through the roof, out of which voices moderately pitched would travel audibly to an outside listener.

About 980 the *Landnáma-bók* (book of Icelandic Colonisation) mentions a domestic tragedy which was enacted in the *dyngja* at the house of *Broad-lair-stead* in *North Reekdale* within *Burgfirth* in western Iceland. The house was the seat of a great magnate who passed generally under the name of

¹ *Reykdale saga* (F. Jónsson, 1881), p. 68.

² *Valla-Ljóts saga* (F. Jónsson, 1881), p. 157.

³ *Njála* (ed. K. Gíslason and E. Jónsson), i. 1875, Ch. 44.

Tongue-Odd. He had a daughter named *Hallgerd*, who was married to a well-born man named *Hallbiorn*. Having got ready to leave this place for his future home, *Hallbiorn* enters the *dyngja* and finds his wife seated on the daïs combing her hair, the finest that any woman in Iceland of her day could boast of. Repeated attempts on the part of *Hallbiorn* to get her to stir having failed, he cut the matter short by shortening her by a head¹. This is the only *dyngja* in which a daïs is expressly mentioned; but that is a mere accident; every *dyngja* must have had some seating arrangement of the kind.

About the year 988 *Hallfred*—nicknamed *Troublous skald* by *Olaf Tryggvison* because he refused to be christened unless that king consented to be his gossip in baptism—came to the homestead of *Avaldi*, the father of the beautiful *Kolfinna*. The homestead was called the *Peak* and was situated within the countryside of *Waterdale* in *Húnathing* in northern Iceland. *Avaldi* was on the point of marrying his daughter to the wealthy, blear-eyed, and near-sighted *Gríss*. Young *Hallfred* was violently in love with the girl. He went to her *dyngja* and persuaded her to come outside and sit on the *dyngja* with him, or according to another reading to sit on the wall of the *dyngja*. 'Who are there sitting on the *dyngja*,' said the blear-eyed bridegroom as he issued from the hall-door²? This situation shews that the wall of the *dyngja* could not have risen over the ground outside to more than an ordinary chair's height.

In 1007 we have mentioned a *dyngja* at a place called *Hrossholt* in the countryside of the *Meres* in western Iceland, where the dead body of *Styr*, *Snorri godi's* father-in-law was waked for a night³.

In the story of *Burnt Nial* the following account of an incident, which happened on Good Friday 1014, is fathered on a certain *Darrad* of *Caithness*, but is obviously due to the inventiveness of folk-lore: *Darrad* saw that twelve women rode

¹ *Landnáma-bók* II. 26. 3, in *Origines Islandicae* I, pp. 112, 113.

² *Hallfreðarsaga*, in *Fornsögur* (ed. G. Vigfusson, 1860), p. 85, Flatey book, I. 304.

³ *Eyrbyggja saga*, ed. G. Vigfusson, 1866, p. 103.

together to a certain *dyngja* and there disappeared all of them. He went to the *dyngja*. He looked into a window that was on it and saw that women inside had set up a loom. The weights were men's heads, but entrails of men were warp and weft, a sword was the slay and the reels were arrows¹. This gruesome description is the only reference to *dyngja* as a weaver's shop. It is interesting as shewing that in the beginning of the eleventh century the *Icelanders* looked upon the *dyngja* as the chamber where weaving was habitually done.

Lastly: at *Holm* in *Hitdale*, on *Snowfellness*, the slayer of *Biorn* the champion of the *Hitdale men* broke the news to *Biorn's* widow sitting in her *dyngja*, 1024².

These references, which exhaust all the information obtainable on the *dyngja* in Iceland, are so far unsatisfactory that they give next to no details with regard to its inner architectural arrangement or outward form. However, with regard to this latter point, the outward form, we can obtain I think a correct idea both from certain local names and from certain humble survivals traceable in certain parts of Iceland still to this day. In Iceland the traveller through its volcanic wildernesses is frequently struck with the form of volcanoes which present to the eye the outline of a very flat dome. These volcanic formations go under the name of *Dyngjufjöll*, Bower-mountains; sometimes a *dyngjufjall* bears the name of *Skjaldbreið*, 'Shield-broad,' on account of the similarity of the outline of its upheaval to the convexity of a round shield, the periphery of the base of these volcanoes always presenting a more or less regular circle. Some of the volcanoes go by the name of *Trolla dyngja*, 'Trolls- or Mountain-sprites' bowers. In Norway, which is not a volcanic country, no mountain-formations of this kind are found, nor any mountains with names such as these. Consequently *dyngjufjöll* is an article both made and named in Iceland. But how? The settlers of the country had been in it for a certain length of time, at any rate, before they had found time and opportunity to explore its wildernesses or to view any *dyngjufjöll*. But the chamber, *dyngja*, they had with them at their abodes down in

¹ *Njáls saga* (ed. K. Gíslason), 1875, i. 898.

² *Bjarnar saga Hitdælakappa* (ed. Haldor K. Friðriksson), p. 68.

the peopled parts. So it is obvious that it was the habitation called *dyngja* which gave the name to the volcanoes, not vice versâ; and clearly it was the outward appearance presented by the *dyngja*, a heap-formed, flat-domed roof rising gently over the level ground, which prompted the beholder, on seeing for the first time the flat-domed volcano, to designate it by the descriptive name *dyngjufjall* (*dyngja*-like mountain).

From the foregoing remarks we come to the conclusion—*that the tunc-dyngja* is a very primitive form of human habitation; *that* the heap-formed accumulation on the top of it gave it its name: *dung house*; *that* it must generally have been round, as heaps usually are at their base; *that* when in Iceland there was a wall to it over-ground, it was of a very slight elevation. This form of house necessitated that light must be admitted through a hole in the apex of the heap; and in all probability that hole must have been round. In wet weather this hole was covered up to keep out the rain by a contrivance consisting of a hoop-frame which accurately fitted the circumference of the hole, and over which a filmy membrane (calf's caul) was stretched so thin and translucent that light, but slightly subdued, was admitted to the chamber. This kind of window was called *skjár* and was the prototype of the round windows (*skjár*) which up to living memory were commonly placed in the roofs of the family sitting-rooms and dormitories all over Iceland. As we pointed out above, this window in the *tunc-dyngja* type of habitations did also serve as chimney, and thereby as a ventilator cleansing the air of the room. So in the *tunc-dyngja* we find the earliest trace of that universal arrangement: the floor used for hearth; the window for a *louver* (*loover, luffer*), to which people stuck with extraordinary tenacity, at least in western and northern Europe, long after they had come to build their houses, even in palatial style, over ground.

The *dyngja*, once upon a time the women's bower, the children's nursery and schoolroom, the closet of gossip and college of traditionally preserved song and saga, is still traceable, though in a very degenerate state, in those round hive-shaped annexes to the kitchen which are met with in

certain places in Iceland. They are now used as stores for fuel for the winter, which is thrown in through a round hole in the top of the roof; and when the fuel has been gathered in, the hole is closed up with a quantity of dung. Whether this pit still retains anywhere in rural speech the name of *dyngja* I am unable to tell.

Monday, 12 March, 1906.

W. M. FAWCETT, M.A., Vice-President, in the Chair.

A paper was read by Mr W. A. RHODES,

ON DENTISTRY : ANCIENT AND BARBARIC.

Mr W. B. REDFERN exhibited an antique spring-gun, a Japanese gun, and some moulds for making ginger-bread.

H. D. CATLING, M.A., exhibited objects from the Wrestlers' Inn, and the Coach and Horses Inn.

E. LLOYD JONES, M.D., exhibited some Chinese Celts.

W. L. RAYNES, M.A., exhibited an octagonal watch of the Tudor period.

Monday, 30 April, 1906.

The Reverend the President in the Chair.

The following paper was read :

ACCOUNT OF A PALAEOLOGIC SITE IN IPSWICH.

By NINA FRANCES LAYARD.

In accepting Professor Ridgeway's kind invitation to give an account before this Institute of my Palaeolithic discoveries in Ipswich, I feel I shall best comply with the wishes of the meeting by avoiding theories, and simply giving as correct a record as I can of the actual work done, and the results obtained in five years spent among Suffolk flints.

As I am often asked how the discovery of this interesting Palaeolithic site came about, it is possible that some fellow flint-

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