

ART. XXXI.—*The Landnama Book of Iceland, as it Illustrates the Dialect, Place Names, Folklore, and Antiquities of Cumberland, Westmorland, and North Lancashire.*

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THE title of the “Landnáma Book,” like many other names when closely considered, contains within itself an epitome of its own meaning. With regard to the first portion of it, the word “Land” means land in Iceland as in England, and “nám,” *n.*, in gen. pl., “náma,” from the strong verb *nema*, to take, means a taking possession of, or settlement; hence the “Landnáma Bók” is the book describing the taking possession of or settlement of land in Iceland by those heads of families of Norsemen who colonised the island.\* As I shall show presently, by an extract, the first date of this settlement is in A.D. 874, when Ingolf, four years after he discovered Iceland, made his home at Ern’s-knoll (Arnarhóll) on the eastern side of the small bay of Reykjavík, round which is clustered the present capital of Iceland. And as this process of settlement was going on, at any rate for the next sixty years,† you will see that it synchronises well with the period when those same Norsemen first began to make their settlements upon the British and more especially upon our northern coasts; and I think it well in the outset to lay some stress upon this very close connection between the

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\* “Landnám,” and “nema land,” are namely, acts of purely private character, no idea of State interest or public policy being implied.—E.M.

† “Sixty years.” Ari the Learned, in *Íslendingabók*, ch. 3, says:—“Svá, hafa oc spakir menn sagt, at á lx vetra yrði Ísland albyggð, svá at eigi væri meirr síðan”: So have also wise men said that in lx. winters was Iceland fully settled so that no further (settlement) there has been since.—E.M.

time

time of the Icelandic and the time of the early British-Norse settlement, for it has an essential bearing upon the conclusion which I think will be more or less brought out in this paper, which is that the same stock of Norsemen, having at the same time colonised those two countries, have left in each the same language, the same place-names, and the same customs; and that a wonderful coincidence can still be made out between them even at this distance of over one thousand years.

There are striking differences between the mode in which the Norsemen colonised England and the mode in which they colonised Iceland. In England they had a continual warfare; in Iceland, as we learn from the *Landnáma Bók*, they made at first a quiet and unresisted settlement, because in the one case they went to a well settled, in the other to an absolutely vacant territory; the one in short was a conquest, the other, as the name implies, was a quiet taking possession of land. And yet the *Landnáma Bók* shows sufficiently that it was the same race, the same tribes, and sometimes even the very same men that were doing both the one and the other. In the *Landnáma Bók* we have the names of the men most familiarly known in our early English history, who seem in that unquiet spirit that marked the early Norsemen to have gone first to Iceland, and then to Scotland and the north of England, or else for a time to have tried Scotland or the north of England and to have gone to Iceland after all. In the *Landnáma Bók* we have also a record of the discovery of America by the Norsemen. It is there called *Vineland* and also *Greater Ireland*, because the Norsemen drifted thither over the ocean from Ireland, and thought the tongue of the people reminded them of, or was identical with, *Erse*.

The *Landnáma Bók* itself bears the impress of two different hands. It was originally written by *Ari Frodi*, that is *Ari* the historian who lived between 1067 and

1148, and who was both a historian and a learned divine, but it was worked into its present form by Sturla Thordarson, who was born 1214 and died 1284.\* It contains a register of the name of every man that settled in Iceland, and in most instances a record of his descendants and where they went, and it contains also a register of every house—farm and tribe or family name. There are 4,588 men's names, and 1,949 place, farm, or tribe names, and I mention these last more especially, as it is from them that I have taken the names that I have used in comparing their place names with our own. I have made my translations from the Copenhagen edition of 1843, which is the last edition that has appeared, and the numbers I have given in reference denote the page in that edition from which my translation was made. *The Clarendon Press* announced an edition some time ago, but I judge from latest inquiries that it has not yet appeared. I give the translation of eight passages. Seven of these I have made myself, but in the second, and much the most difficult and important passage, I have had the very

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\* The history of the composition of the Landnámabók is briefly this:—

1. *Ari Thorgilsson*, the Learned, wrote the history of the settlements of the South, West, and North Quarter.
2. *Kolskegg Asbiornson*, the Learned, his contemporary, described the East Quarter. Cfr *Landnámabók*, p. 249: Nú heifir Kolskeggr fyrir sagt héðan frá um landnám=“ Now has Kolskegg dictated (the story) henceforth as to the settlements.
3. The joint work of these two was again edited by
  - (a) *Styrmir*, the “Learned,” son of *Kari* (ob. 1245). This edition was again gone over and revised, and no doubt added to by
  - (b) *Sturla Thórdson* (1214-1284); which recensions (*a* & *b*)
  - (c) *Hauk Erlendsson* re-edited, his edition, the “*Hauksbók*,” forming one of the principal texts of the *Landnámabók*.—There is a special recension also based on *a* and *b*, the so-called “*Melabok*,” the author of which is not known, though there is no doubt that he was a *Sturlung*; if not *Marcus Thordson* of *Melar* himself, then his son or grandson.—A prior *Brand Halldórsson* the Learned, of the 12th century, is also mentioned, not exactly as a writer of *Landnámabók*, but as author of the genealogies of the men of *Broadfirth*, “*Briedfirdingakyn*.” He may be a possible primary contributor to the great work that bears *Aris'* name.

What the later editors of *Landnámabók* did add to it, did no doubt, chiefly consist in genealogical lore; they brought the lines down to their own immediate predecessors.—E.M.

able

able help of Eric Magnússon, assistant librarian of the Cambridge University Library, a native Icelander, and a distinguished philologist in England as well as in Iceland, and moreover one of the kindest and most willing helpers that ever it has been my good fortune to meet.

Bound up with the Landnáma Bók, and forming a portion of it, is a chronological table of the chief events that happened in Iceland, together with the names of the speakers of the parliament of the commonwealth (lög-sögumenn), and when and where they flourished; and commencing with the first settlement in 874. I have given the record of this table for a period of about 400 years. The first translation is from the portion that records the very first settlement in Iceland 874. The original occurs at page 33, chapter vi. of Landnáma Bók. It is as follows:—

“ Sumar þat, er þeir Ingólfr fóru til at byggja Ísland hafði Haraldr hárfagri verit xii. ár konungr at Noregi; þá var liðit frá upphafi þessa heims vi. þúsundir vetra ok lxxiii. vetr, en frá holdgan drottins dccc. ok lxxiii. ár. Þeir höfðu samflot, þar til er þeir sá Ísland; þá skildi með þeim þá er Ingólfr sá Ísland, skaut hann fyrir borð öndugis súlum sínum til heilla; hann mælti svá fyrir, at hann skyldi þar byggja er súlurna kæmi á land.\* Hann var enn þridja vetr undir Ingolfsfelli fyrir vestan Ölfusá. Þau missari fundu þeir Vifill ok Karli öndvegissúlur hans við Arnarhvál fyrir neþan heiði. Ingolfr fór um várit ofan um heiði; han tók sér bústað þar sem öndvegissúlur hans höfðu á land komit; hann bjó í Reykjarvík; þar eru enn öndvegissúlur þær í eldhúsi.” This passage I have rendered as follows:—

“ That summer, when Ingolf and his companions went to settle in Iceland, Harold the Fairhaired had been king of Norway for twelve

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\* I have here omitted the portion that refers to the fortunes of Ingolf's companions, and continued the narrative when it again alludes to himself.—T. E.

years

years. At that time had passed from the beginning of the world 6,073 winters, and from the Incarnation of our Lord 874 years. They sailed together until they sighted Iceland, then they separated. When Ingolf saw Iceland he threw overboard his high-seat posts for good luck (or as an omen), and took a solemn oath that he would there build, where the high-seat posts should come upon shore. He passed the third winter at the foot of Ingolfssfell (a mountain named from him), on the west of Olfuswater. This year (his men) Vifill and Karli found his high seat posts near the *Ernu-knoll* (Arnarhvál), beneath the heath.\* Ingolf went in that spring down across this heath, and he took up his abode where his seat posts had come to land. He dwelt at Reykjarvík, and his high-seat posts are still in the eldhouse"—literally fire-house (fire-hall).

I have quoted this passage at the outset, as it fixes with a sufficient degree of exactness the date of the first settlement of Iceland, namely, as given in this text 874 (less correctly given in the list of dates at the end of the *Landnámabók* as 875).

The most remarkable description in this and the following passage is the mode which those Norsemen took to guide them in the selection of their future home. The word I have translated high-seat posts is *öndugis súlur*,† and referred to the two pillars of the high-seat of the

\* "Beneath the heath." You have here to deal with a very peculiar phrase of topography. The upland plateau which in a south-westerly direction runs down from the extinct volcano of Skjaldbreid, which lies far inland N.E. of Reykjavík, and terminates in the promontory of Reykjanes, is, for that portion which divides the lowlands of the Reykjavík region from those south and south-west of Ingolfssfell, called Mossfell's Heath, shortened generally in the sagas into Heath simply. Now all localities which lie in the *western* watershed of this heath are said to be "beneath," or "below," the Heath, while those *east* of it are said to be above the heath. This peculiar topographical expression must have arisen originally in the household of Ingolf at Reykjavík, or at Erno Knoll, while he and his were under the impression that all localities east of the heath, being *inland* localities from the point of view of Ernknull, were necessarily at a higher level above the sea than Reykjavík and its seaboard surroundings. We may, therefore, safely date this phrase as first originating in 874.—E.M.

† "*Öndugis súlur*" öndugis gen. of öndugi, n., contracted from önd-vegi, which is the common form. The derivation of the word is not quite settled yet. But the most probable derivation is from önd=porch, doorway, and vegr way. Öndvegis sæti is probably the original expression: the seat that faced the way along which arrivals to the hall made their progress up to the chief's presence. It is a noteworthy fact that no pillars or high-seat posts are mentioned dedicated to any other god but Thor. In the main the pillars were emblems of tribal chieftainship in its two principal aspects: martial leadership and priestly authority.—E.M.

father

father of the family, or chief, or priest, for they were all included in the same person. These were ornamented with carved figures of Thor ; hence you will find in the next passage it is called a Thor, and the place where it came ashore is called Thorness, just as Thursby, in Cumberland, is literally the dwelling of Thor. These seats then, or seat pillars, they brought with them when they sought new homes, and when near Iceland cast them overboard into the sea and let them drift ashore in whatever direction the tide took them ; and wherever they found them cast ashore there they built their home and formed their settlement, as the place marked out for them by the god. The high-seat, or chair so named, with its ornamented or carved posts, was looked upon as a symbol of the father's authority as a priest or a parent, and there is a record that the son was not allowed to sit in his father's seat until he had avenged his death. The curious way in which those chairs, or seat-posts, were carved and ornamented with figures was a very marked characteristic of them, and the very curious carved arm-chairs and high-backed chairs, yet to be found in old country houses in this neighbourhood, and highly prized and much sought after by collectors of carved work, may have had their origin from these ornamentally carved chairs, which were such an essential element in marking out the original homes of the Norsemen.

This passage is interesting in another point, for Reykjavik,\* of which it records the settlement, is, though but a village of somewhat about 4000 inhabitants, the present capital of the island. It is literally reek town, or smoke

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\* The meaning of the name is Reek-wick ; wick meaning bay, or bight—not the wick which descends from Lat. vicus, hamlet, township. The name arises from the fact that in the close neighbourhood there are warm, steaming springs. —Do you mean Reykjaor Reyk-holt by Reck wood ? If so, the word "holt" in Iceland does not mean wood (holz) but a hill-rise, bare and exposed ; perhaps Reek-Knoll would come near enough.—E.M.

town,

town, reminding us of Auld Reekie, or Edinburgh of Burns. We all know what reek is in Cumberland, and reek as a place name occurs abundantly in Iceland; there is Reek River, Reek Dale, Reek Ness, and Reek Wood, Reek Hole, and Reek Strand. We have the word most familiar in the dialect, but as a place-name it seems to be almost peculiar to Iceland. The pillars of transparent steam from the hot springs and geysers, as seen afar off, must have struck the minds of the first settlers, who gave names to the localities.

The word *eldhús*, or fire-house, used in this passage to describe the room where the high-seat was kept with superstitious reverence, is, I think, interesting, as the word *eld* for fire is a word that may be taken as a test of Scandinavian races as distinguished from the Teutonic, who use *feuer*—fire—which is wanting in Scandinavian.\* We have *elding* for fuel all over Furness at any rate; in fact, in High Furness, it seems until lately almost the only word thus used; here then we have a very marked and close relationship.

The superstition of keeping up a sacred fire, as this passage seems to indicate, was by no means peculiar to Iceland; the fire tended by the vestal virgins is sufficiently recorded, and one marked command about the Jewish Tabernacle was that *the fire shall not go out*; the word “*couvre feu*,” from which “*curfew*” is derived, would appear to mean to cover, or rake, and not altogether extinguish the fire. The fire was raked or covered in Iceland, and thus kept up from day to day continually, and anyone who is conversant—as I have been almost all my life—with our own portion of Lakeland, knows with

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\* *Feuer*, Engl. fire, does exist in Scandinavian, but only in technical usages; and in Icelandic it only occurs in the ancient poets in the form of *fúrr*, *fýrr*. By-the-way, does “*elding*” ever occur in Cumberland in the sense of lightning? You know the word means fuel in Icelandic as well as in Cumberland, so the relationship is not only close, but identical.—E.M.

what

what superstitious reverence the old hearth fire was raked or put in a condition of smouldering at nights, and so kept up from day to day, from month to month, from year to year, and from generation to generation, and, I certainly knew, in more instances than one, homes where the fire had been kept up for three generations; and during all that time had been so zealously guarded that it had not been once allowed to go out. There is a well-known instance in our own neighbourhood where a man had what he called "his grandfather's fire;" that is a fire that was known to have been kept up without extinction for at least three generations, that when it once accidentally went out he went to some woodcutters who had lighted their fire from his, and brought back from their fire a fire to his own hearth, that thus he might preserve, as it were, the seeds of his ancestors' original fire.

The next passage which I have, with the assistance of Mr. Magnusson, translated from the *Landnáma Bók*, refers to the settlement of Thorolf, and the establishment of the Things, or local Legislative Assemblies, and I have quoted it in connection with the first passage, as the date of the first passage will enable us to fix the date of the second with a tolerable degree of exactness, for Ingolf, who is mentioned in the first, and Thorold, who is mentioned in the second, both left Norway for Iceland in the reign of the same King (Harold the Fairhaired), and they seem both to have been driven away by the unbearable tyranny of his government, and they both went forth trusting in the auspices of Thor as the guardian deity who should guide them in safety to their future home. The passage I now quote respecting Thorold is chap. 12 in the second part of the *Landnama Book*, and it commences at p. 96. I have translated it without any omission to the end; it is as follows:—12 Þórólfr, son Örnólfs fiskreka, bjó í Mostr, því var hann kallaðr Mostrarskegg; hann var blótmaðr mikill, ok trúði á Þór; hann fór fyrir ofríki Haralds

Haralds konungs hárfagra til Íslands, ok sigldi fyrir sunnan land; en er hann kom vestr fyrir Breiðafjörð, þá skaut hann fyrir borð öndvegis súlum sínum; þar var skorinn a Þórr; hann mælti svá fyrir, at Þórr skyldi þar á land koma, sem hann vildi at Þórólfr bygði, hēt hann því, at helga þór allt landnám sitt, ok kenna við hann. Þórólfr sigldi inn á fjörðinn, ok gaf nafn firðinum, ok kallaði Breiðafjörð; hann tók land fyrir sunnan fjörðinn, nær miðjum firðinum, þar fann hann þór rekinn í nesi einu; þat heitir nú Þórsnes. Þeir lendu þar inn frá í váginn, er Þórólfr kallaði Hofsvág; þar reisti hann bæ sinn, okgjörði þar hof mikit, ok hegaldi þór, þar heita nú Hofstaðir. Fjörðrinn var þá bygðr lítt eðr ekki. Þórólfr nam land frá Stafá inn til Þórsár, ok kallaði þat allt Þórsnes, hann hafði svá mikinn átrúnað á fjall þat, er stóð í nesinu, er hann kallaði Helgafell, at þangat skyldi engi maðr öpveginn líta, ok þar var svá mikil friðhelgi, at aungu skyldi granda í fjallinu, hvárki fé né mönnum, nema sjálft gengi á braut; þat var trúa þeirra Þórólfs frænda, at þeir dæi allir í fjallit. Þar á nesinu, sem þórr kom á land, hafði Þórólfr dóma alla, ok þar var sett héraðsþing með ráði allra sveitarmanna. En er menn voru þar á þinginu, þá skyldi víst eigi hafa álfreka á landi, ok var ætlat til þess sker þat, er Dritsker heitir, þvíat þeir vildu eigi saurga svá helgan völl sem þar var. En þá er Þórólfr var dauðr, en Þorsteinn, son hans, var ungr, þá vildu þeir Þorgrímur Kjallaksson ok Asgeirr, mágr hans, eigi ganga í skerit örna sinna; þat þoldu eigi Þórsnes-singar, er þeir vildu saurga svá helgan völl, því börðust þeir Þorsteinn Þorskalatr ok Þorgeirr Kengr við þá Þorgrím ok féllu þar nökkurir menn, en margir urðu sárir, áðr þeir urðu skildir. Þórdr gellir sætti þá; ok með því at hvárugir vildu láta af sínu máli, þá var völlrinn óheilagr af heiptar blóði. Þá var þat ráð tekit, at færa brutt þaðan þingit, ok inn í nesit, þar sem nú er; var þar þá helgistaðr mikill ok þar stendr enn Þórs steinn, er þeir brutu þá menn um, er þeir blótuðu, ok þar hjá er sá dómhringr, er menn skyldu

skyldu til blóts dæma. Þar setti ok þórðr gellir fjórðungsþing með ráði allra fjórðungs manna. Son Þórólfs Mostrarskeggja var Hallsteinn Þorskafjarðargoði, faðir Þorsteins surts ens spaka ; Ósk var móðir Þorsteins surts, dóttir Þorsteins rauðs. Annarr son Þórólfs var Þorsteinn Þorskabitr, hann átti þóru, dóttur Ólafs feilans, systur Þérðar gellis, þeirra son var Þorgrimr, faðir Snora goða, ok Börkr enn digri, faðir Sáms, er Ásgeirt vá.

“Thorolf, son of Ornof—‘Fishdriver,’—dwelt in Most-isle. He was called Mostbeard; he was a great man of blood offerings, and believed in Thor.

He emigrated to Iceland on account of the tyranny of Harold the Fairhaired, and sailed by the southern part of the land; but when he was came west, off Broadfirth, he threw overboard the high-seat posts, whereon Thor was carved. And he prayed thereover that Thorr (as he called the pillars) should come to land where the god wished him to settle, and he promised that he would dedicate all the land of his settlement (*landnám sitt*) to Thor, and name it after him. Thorolf then sailed into the frith, and gave a name to the frith and called it Broadfrith. He took land on the south side, near the middle of the frith. There he found Thor cast ashore, upon a point of land which is now called Thorsness on that account. They landed further up the ness in the bay which he called Temple Bay (*Hofsvág*). There he reared his home, and there he built a large temple and consecrated it to Thor, and now the place is called Temple Stead (*Hofstadir*). The frith had been very sparsly settled before this time, or not at all. Thorolf took land (*nam* land) from Staffriver inwards to Thorsriver, and called all that part Thorsness. He had so great a reverence for that fell which stands on the ness, and which he called Helgafell—Holy Fell,—that he enjoined that thither should no man unwashen look; and there was so great place-hallowness (sanctuary) that nothing should be destroyed on the mountain, neither cattle nor people, unless it should go away of its own accord. That was the belief of them, Thorolf and his kinsmen, that they should die into the mountain.\* There on the ness, where Thorr (Thor’s pillar, the high-seat post carved with Thor’s image) came aland, Thorolf had all the docms (law courts), and there was set up the district-

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\* “Die into the mountain,” *i.e.*, would dwell within the mountain after their death.—E.M.

assembly

assembly (legislative) by the advice of all the men of the countryside (the dependents of Thorolf, who formed his temple parish, as it were, he being their temple priest). But while men were at the Thing, easements should surely not be had on land (it was strictly forbidden to men to go on nature's errands on the land),\* and for that purpose was set apart that skerry (sea cliff) which is called Dirt Skerry, for that they should not defile such a holy field as was there. But then when Thorolf was dead, and Thorstein, his son, still young, then they Thorgrim Kiallakson and Asgeir, his son-in-law, would not go into the skerry on their errands. This the Thoressings would not stand, that they should wish to defile so holy a field, therefore fought they, Thorstein Codbiter and Thorgeir Staple, against those Thorgrim and Asgeir, there at the Thing about the skerry, and certain men fell there and more got wounded, or ever they could be parted. Thord the Yeller appeased them, and whereas neither side would yield, the field having been already defiled with the blood of the deadly feud (*heipt*, implacable or mortal hostility), this counsel was taken, to remove away from there the Thing (assembly) and take it up into the ness, where it now is; was there then a place of great hallowedness (sanctity), and there stands still the stone of Thor, over which they broke those men whom they sacrificed, and thereby is that doomring where people should be doomed (condemned) to sacrifice.

There also Thord the Yeller placed the quarter parliament, with the counsel of all the men in the quarter.

The son of Thorolf (Mostbeard) was Hallsteinn, priest of the men of Codfirth, father of Thorstein the Black, a wise man; † Osk was the mother of Thorsteinn the Black, and daughter of Thorsteinn the Red.

Another son of Thorolf was Thorsteinn Codbiter. He had Thora to wife, the daughter of Olaf Feilan, ‡ sister of Thord the Yeller. Their son was Thorgrim, father of Snorri the Priest, and Bork the Big, father of Sam whom Asgeir slew."

I may remark here, with regard to what I have translated as the quarter parliament (*fjordungs thing*), that the

\* *Alf-rek* (*elf-chase*), that which by its impurity drives away the pure and tender guardian spirits of the soil.—E.M.

† He was called the Wise because he reformed the calendar of Iceland, c. A.D. 960. Cfr. *Islendingabók*, ch. iv.—E.M.

‡ Feilan is a nickname, a word of Celtic origin, and uncertain sense.—T.E.

whole

whole of Iceland was divided into four divisions called North, South, East, and West Quarters, and these divisions exist up to the present time.\* Each of these divisions had a *fjordungs thing*, or quarter parliament, and each had also a *fjordungs domr*, or quarter court.†

It will be seen at once that a good deal of the meaning of this passage, of its place names, proper names, and that which more especially directed those Norsemen to their early settlements, turns upon their devotion to Thor. The high-seat post, of which I have here translated the fortunes, was a carved image of Thor, carved upon the back of the high chair used in his temple: hence it is called the Thor, and marked out the place where they should land and settle. The place that Thor occupied in Scandinavian mythology is well known; he was the god of thunder, the keeper of the hammer, the ever fighting slayer of trolls and the queller and destroyer of all evil spirits, the defender of the earth and the friend of mankind. There are giants ready to assail the earth and its inhabitants in the Scandinavian as in the classical mythology. Thor, like Jupiter, meets them in a hard fought conflict, and some of the finest lays and legends of the Edda, like the sublime *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, are devoted to describing those battles of the gods. It is Thor and his hammer who go number one in these conflicts, and he and his attendant divinities are always sketched as driving off those giants as those malign and opposing influences who would destroy and overturn the earth. Jack the Giant Killer, Tom Ravehead and much of our northern nursery lore may have had

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\* The Quarter Division does exist no more for any administrative purpose. It merely exists as a remembered item of antiquity, and a convenient geographical expression.—E.M.

† You had better make it clear, that the institution of the Quarter Courts, by Thord Yeller at the Althing in 964, had no connection with this fight between the men of Thorness and the followers of Kiallak the Old. This feud raged A.D. 932-34. The Quarter thing here spoken of was the rural court, or first instance, before which cases out of the quarter could come. The Quarter Courts at the Althing were of a quite different constitution.—E.M.

its

its origin from Thor and his conflicts. The stones and cairns, like the law mounds and doomcircles, were consecrated to him, and Vigfusson quotes this inscription from a heathen Danish Runic stone: “þurr vigi þassi runar.” —“Thor consecrate these runes.” We certainly have evidence of such a worship and such an influence in some of our northern names. Thursday marks this, and I think it is very likely that the name was first so applied in the northern portion of England, for yet those who speak in the dialect do not call it Thursday but Thorsday. The derivation of the place-name Thursby is very directly shown in the passage I have just translated. Thur is no doubt, I think, Thor; and by=bae, which in the Icelandic means a homestead or dwelling, and this bae is the very word in the original Icelandic for homestead in that passage which I have translated.\* “There he raised his homestead, and there he built a large temple, and consecrated to Thor the place.” Runic and other stones dedicated to the divinity were called Thor’s stones or Thorsteinn; hence by an obvious transition became place-names or personal names. We have an evidence of this in more than one instance in the north. You have Thurstonfield near Carlisle, and the old name of Coniston Lake in High Furness was Thurston, or Thurstone Water, and the name is still preserved in Thurston Ville, a residence at a short distance from the foot of the Lake.

There is one place in this passage which, from the institution connected with it, is of very considerable importance, and that is the word *dómhringr*—Doomcircle—the doom ring or judgment ring. The courts of the heathen Norsemen were surrounded by this *domhringr*, about a bowshot from the centre where the benches were placed; and no evildoer might enter this ring, or commit

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\* The declension of *bær*: —*Bær*, *bæ*, *by*, —a dwelling.

an act of violence within it ; if he did so he was called a *vargr í veum*—"a wolf in the holy place." We have the date of the institution of those quarter courts, one for each of the four political divisions of the county, as they are here instituted by Thord the Yeller, namely, in the year 964 ; and at a later date a Fifth High Court, called *Fimtar-dómr*, was instituted about A.D. 1004.

In this connection occurs the *dura-dómr*, or court at the door of the defendant, of which we have an accurate description in the Icelandic, and which, with the uproar which accompanied them would appear to have left their mark in the word *durdom*, or *doordom*, of our own dialect.

The *dómhringr*, or divisional law court, appeared to me to be so interesting, especially in the mode and manner in marking them out, that I wrote to Mr. Magnusson, who is a native Icelander, and has spent the whole of his earlier life in Iceland, to ask him whether there were any traces of these original courts yet to be found in that land. He wrote back and said that there were traces of them still be found scattered up and down that country.

The stone circles which are to be found scattered here and there in various parts of Cumberland and other portions of Lakeland have never, I think, been accounted for, nor has any hypothesis been brought forward that would more completely meet the case than the doom rings which marked the ancient law courts of the Norse.\* They are called Druidical, certainly, by some writers, but I am not

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\* At a discussion which followed the reading of this paper at Sedbergh, it was remarked by some members of the Society that the date of the Cumberland megaliths was probably much earlier than the first immigration of the Norse. Without positively deciding either way, I may make the following quotation from Ferguson's *Northmen*. Speaking of Long Meg and her daughters, he says :— " Even if it could be shown to have been used by the Northmen it would not prove that they erected it, or if it could be proved to be of ancient British origin, would it show that they did not make use of it? For it would be as natural for the Northmen, finding such a magnificent structure ready made to their hand, to adopt it for their own purposes, as for the Moslems to convert the Christian Church of St. Sophia into a Mahomedan mosque."—T.E.

aware

aware that there is anything, excepting mere hypothesis, to warrant the application of such a title as this. The earliest published account of them is by Camden, who made a survey of Cumberland in 1599; and the editor suggests that with regard to the stone circle at Little Salkeld, known as "Long Meg and her Daughters," that they were Norse in their origin, and were monuments used at the Investiture of Danish kings. A paper, entitled "A Group of Cumberland Megaliths," was read before the members of this Society on June 16th, 1880, by C. W. Dymond, in which he deals with and gives accurate plans and measurement of four such circles, namely, the one I have mentioned, known as Long Meg and her Daughters, the circles at Swinside and at Keswick, and the principal circle on Eskdale Moor. I have carefully read over all he has said about them, more especially what he has said about the stone circle at Keswick, and the long list of varied authorities he and other writers have quoted on the subject, and I cannot find any positive evidence for supposing that they were Druidical, rather than for supposing they were Norse. In the Orkney Islands the Standing Stones of Stennis, which are 70 or 80 in number, and form two circles of 100 feet and 360 feet in diameter, bear a strong resemblance to the stone circle at Keswick, there is no reason to suppose that the Druids ever occupied any part of the Orkneys, and tradition, as well as history, ascribes the stones of Stennis to the Scandinavians. I cannot see, therefore, why in those Domhringer, or Doom Circles, of the Landnama Book we may not find the origin or at any rate the use of those stone circles that are still existing amongst our own mountains, for I think I have shown with sufficient clearness that the same race, whose doings are recorded in the Landnama Book, came to Scotland and the northern portion of England at the same time that they went to Iceland, and it is well known that all those northern nations marked by such huge enclosures  
their

their places of popular meeting, either for religious worship or for the transaction of public business of a temporal character; and the passage itself seems to point out with sufficient clearness that such stone circles were used for purposes of judicial and religious assemblies, and had existed down to the time of the writer, for the words—“Ok þar stendr enn þórs steinn, er þeir þrutu þá menn um, er þeir blótudu, ok þar hjá er sá dómhringr, er menn skyldu till blóts dæma,” are literally—

“There still stands the stone of Thor, over which they broke those men whom they sacrificed, and there is that Domhringr, or Doom-circle, where the people should be judged,” *i.e.*, doomed, or condemned to sacrifice.

In a district that is very near to us, are preserved both the terms Dom and Thing, as applied to those assemblies. For the Deemster, or Doomster, of the Isle of Man was originally so-called because he pronounced doom or judgment in the legal assemblies, and the Tynwald Hill\* (upon which the laws were promulgated) contains within it the root “þing,” the title applied to the popular and legal assemblies of the Norse. In connection with these legal assemblies, I may note from the Landnama Book, his office who was the principal personage at such places, the Lögsögumadr, or law-speaker:—In the ancient Icelandic commonwealth, the community or State had its own laws, its own parliament, and its own lawsayer. This law-speaker was the first commoner, and the spokesman of the people at public assemblies and elsewhere. He was the guardian of the law, and the president of the legisla-

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\* The word Thingwald, or, as you give it, Tynwald, is preserved in a better form in Orkney and Shetland, where it is Thingwall; wall being the same as Icel. völlr (gen. vallar, dat. velli)=a field, Thingwall, therefore=Thingfield or Thingmead.

You have Thingwall in Cheshire, Tinwald close by Dumfries in Scotland, where, too, on the Cromarty Firth, there is a Dingwall; in the neighbourhood of Whitby is a Thingwall.—E.M.

tive

tive body. As in heathen times, laws were not written; the law-speaker had to say what was the law of the land in any case of doubt. In the general assemblies in Iceland he had to say the law from memory to the assembled people from the law-hill; hence in the Icelandic commonwealth he is called the law-speaker or law-sayer, and his office law-speaking. As early Iceland was a commonwealth, the names and dates of those early law-speakers are given in the Landnama Book in the very same way that the names and dates of kings and their reigns are given in other histories; one of the earliest and most famed of them was Þorkell Máni, who held that office for fifteen years, from A.D. 970. He was grandson of Ingolf the first settler, and that is a most interesting passage in the Landnámabók which describes his character and death. It is as follows:—"Son Þorsteins var þorkell máni lögsögumadr, einn heiðinna manna hefir bezt verit siðaðir at því er menn vita dæmi til. Hann lét sik bera í solargeisla í banasótt sinni, ok fal sik a hendi þeim guði er sólina hafði skapat, hafði hann ok lifat sva hreinliga, sem þeir kristnir menn er bezt eru siðaðir." I have thus translated it:—

The son of Thorsteinn was Thorkell Moon, a lawspeaker, or law-sayer, who, so far as men can judge of exemplary conduct, was the best of all the heathen folk. In his last illness he caused himself to be borne to where the beams of the sun shone upon him, and commended himself, when so dying, into the hands of that god who had shaped (skapat) the sun. His life had been pure as that of the most religious of Christians.

Solar, the sun god, was an object of of worship amongst the early Norsemen, and *Sunday* has a Norse as well as an Anglo-Saxon significance. This passage shows very plainly what they thought of their deity.

I am still dealing with the second extract which I have translated from the Landnámabók, and wish to draw  
your

your attention to one expressive word in that passage, where it is said :—“Thorolf reared his homestead—the words are in the original, þarr reisti hann bæ sinn—*there raised he his dwelling.*” That word *dwelling*, in the original Icelandic, is “bær”—b and æ diphthong; the word bæ is from the Icelandic “búa,”—to dwell, and means, therefore, a dwelling; It is “Bö,” in Norway; “By,” in Denmark and Sweden, and the unnumbered “bys” that we have as the termination of village names in the north of England are really the “bær” that we have in this passage of the Landnáma Bók and in the map of northern England. The use of this word “By” in the village and place-names may well serve to mark out the limit and extent of the Norse immigration. Anderson, our local dialect poet, who does not as a rule go in much for derivation, has nevertheless noted the frequent recurrence of this place-name, for in the “Thursby Witch” he says :—

There's Harraby an Tarraby,  
An Wigganby beseyde ;  
There's Oughterby an Souterby  
An “Bys” baith far and weyde.

A passage which occurs at page 126 of the Landnáma Bók, gives an interesting instance of how this “bær” was compounded as a proper name in Iceland. It is said of Steinolf when he came to settle :—“Hann sá eitt rjódr í dal þeim, þar lét hann bæ gjöra, ok kallaði Saurbæ, þviat þar var myrlent mjök, ok sva kallaði hann allan dalinn.” I have translated this as follows :—

He saw a clearing in the dale (otherwise grown with wood) and there he built his bæ (dwelling), and called it Saurbæ—sour or swampy dwelling, because there was much swampy land, and by the same name he called the whole dale.

That is, he called the whole dale Saurbæ, or Sowerby, *the swampy dwelling.* You will see this dale Saurbæ,

or

or Sowerby, marked upon this map of Iceland, and there is another instance upon this same map of precisely a similar application of the same name of Saurbær. Such swampy or boggy land is still called *sour* land in Cumberland, and with regard to this Saurbær, or swampy dwelling, we have precisely the same name in Cumberland, in Sowerby, Castle Sowerby, and Temple Sowerby. Mýr, or Mire, which also in this passage is used for boggy or swampy ground, has also illustrations in Cumberland, in "Mire"—Mire-House, Mire-Side, Pelutho-Mire, and The Mires. I have singled out the case of Saurbær, or Sowerby, as an instance because in Iceland and in Cumberland the place-names derived therefrom are, as I may say, identical; and it serves well to show from what natural circumstances the early Norsemen in both countries first fixed their dwellings, and named their homes.

From this verb "bua," to dwell or settle, we get another Norse word, "buandi," or "bondi,"\* which meant *a tiller of the ground*, but always involved the idea of ownership, and hence especially marked the class represented in Cumberland, by the word "yeomen," who owned the land which they tilled.

In some cases in Iceland, as elsewhere, trees seem to have formed the origin of place-names, and in more instances than one, we find places in the Landnámá Bók called Reynir, or Reyni—this is almost without alteration, our Cumberland name of the mountain ash, or rowan tree; the Danish brings it nearer still, it is rönne tree. Places in Iceland, therefore, called "Reynir," really mean the rowan trees,† or mountain ashes, and this word marks perhaps more than any other the intimate

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\* The surname "Bond" may have had its origin from this.—T.E.

† The fowler's service, mountain ash or rowan tree, one of the most elegant of British trees, conspicuous in the flowering season by its delicate green foliage and large bunches of blossom, and in autumn by its clusters of scarlet berries or pomes, used for catching birds; hence one of its names.—T.E.

connection

connection between the words and superstitions of Scandinavia and the north of England. At p. 273 of the *Landnáma Bók*, it is applied in connection with a settlement as follows:—"Björn hét madr, auðigr ok ofláti mikill, hann fór til Íslands af Valldresi, ok nam land milli Kerlingarár ok Hafrsár, ok bjó at Reyni."

There was a man named Bjorn, opulent and very showy. He came to Iceland from Valldres, and took land between Kerling (Carline)-river, and Hafrs (Haver's) river, and dwelt at Reynir, or the Rowan trees.

It is also found in Rayni Keldur, or *the well at the rowan trees*, and Reyni Staðr. It was thus applied to mark places at the time of the settlement, as the only sort of tree, except the dwarf birch, to be found in Iceland. The rowan\* was a holy tree, consecrated to Thor, and, according to the legends, to be found in their literature very intimately connected with the mysteries and superstitions of the Icelanders. "Raynir," from runa—a mystery, was so-called in Iceland from the supposed magical influence of the tree against witches.

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\* The sacredness of the rowan tree and the worship centring round it, was due to this myth:—Snorra Edda I., 286:—"Thor came to be a guest of the Ogress called Grídr, the mother of Vidar the Silent (dumb). She told Thor the truth of Geirröd, that he was a marvellously wise giant, and an evil one to deal with withal. She lent to Thor the belt of might and main (*megingjardar*) and iron grips, which were hers, and her staff, called Grídr's staff, or pole. Then Thorir walked on to the river which is called Vimr, the greatest of all rivers. Then he clasped round himself the belt of might and main, and steadied himself against Grídr's pole, which he stuck down water, but Loki held to the belt. And when Thor came to the middle of the river, then it waxed so greatly that it broke against the shoulder of him. Then sang Thor:—

Wax thou not, Wimur,  
Awading as I am  
Unto the giants' homes.  
Know, if thou waxest,  
Then waxes, too, my might,  
As high as the heaven's aloft.

Then saw Thor that, up in certain gorges, stood Gjalp, the daughter of Geirraud, astraddle across the river, and she it was that made the swelling of the river. Then Thor took a huge stone from the river bed, and hurled it at her, saying thus: at ouse (oyce=source) shall river be stemmed (stified), nor did he miss his mark. And in the nick of time he staggered towards the bank, and caught hold of a certain rowan bush, and so stepped up out of the river. Hence the saying, "The Rowan the saving of Thor."—E.M.

There

There is a place called Raynors in Cumberland, which seems to mean "the mountain ashes." In some places in the north of England a piece of the rowan tree used to be placed above the door to scare away evil influences, and in Lakeland the stick for stirring the cream is frequently of rowan tree wood, to counteract the malign spiritual influences which at times bewitched the churn, so that no butter was forthcoming. This idea is found in Burns where he says:—

Thence country wives in toil and pain,  
 May plunge and plunge the kirn in vain ;  
 For, oh! the yellow treasures taen  
   By witching skill,  
 And dawtit twal-pint hawkies gaen  
   As yells the bill.

Anent this supposed magical influence of the rowan tree, Will Ritson, of Wasdale Head, once told me the following story:—

It has from time immemorial been the custom of the people of Wasdale to carry their dead to Eskdale or Netherwasdale Church for interment, there being no burial ground attached to the church at Wasdale Head. The corpse in the coffin is slung over the back of a horse and carried in this fashion over the fell. On one occasion (lang sen) the wife of a dalesman was being so carried for interment. When upon the edge of the fell the coffin, through the negligence of the driver of the horse, came in contact with a rowan tree, and was thrown to the ground. By the concussion the coffin was forced open, and the supposed corpse was found to be alive. She returned home with her friends, and lived for several years after. When she died, and the same kind of cavalcade was following her remains in very much the same fashion, as they approached the said rowan tree again, her husband, who was bringing up the rear, called out (according to Will) in stentorian tones: "Tak' care o' that rowan tree!" This time, however, the rowan tree was successfully cleared.

At p. 109 of the Landnáma Bók is the record of the settlement of a Norsewoman named Aud. She was the  
 wife

wife of Olaf the White, King of Dublin. Upon his death she went with her son Thorsteinn, and settled in the Hebrides. Thence her son, joining with Sigard, subdued Caithness, Sutherland, Ross, and Murray, and in all more than half of Scotland. He was slain in battle. She then sailed for Iceland, as is recorded in the following passage:—"Eptir þat for Audr at leita Islands: hun hafði á Skipi með sér xx karla frjálsa." This passage may be rendered:—"After that Audr went to seek Iceland; she had in the ship with her 20 freemen:—

Taking this sentence word for word there is a remarkable correspondence between it and our northern dialect, and the old words that still linger on in the translation of the Bible, as the older and purer form of Early English speech:—*Eptir þat*—after that needs no translation; *for*, or *fare*, means "to go," in the Icelandic; we have the very word in "farewell—go well. In Genesis the same old word occurs—"See how the brethren *fare*"—"See how they go." At *leita*, "to seek" is a phrase we have in North Lancashire; anybody in Furness knows just as well as they know in Iceland that "at *leit*"=to seek. "*In a skipi*," in the ship, *a* means *on* or *in*, and is really the very same *a* that we have in the old phrases abroad—*astern*, *afoot*: *karl*, a man of lower degree, or freed man; we have the very same word in the Bible in the phrase, "Nor the churl said to be bountiful."—Isaiah xxxii.

Thus far then the account of Audr's going to Iceland. She spent an active and eventful life there, and at p. 117 of the *Landnámabók*, we have the following record of her death:—

Audr was a very noble lady,\* and when she was weary with *eld* (old age) she invited her kinsmen and folk-in-law, and made ready a

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\* Aud was third in descent from Ingolf, the original settler of Iceland, and was ancestress of Ari, compiler of the *Landnámabók*, who claims to be eighth in descent from her.—T.E.

grand banquet. And when the banquet had lasted for three nights, then she selected gifts for her friends, and also gave them wholesome counsel.

She said that the banquet should still last for another three nights, and she added that that should be her funeral banquet (*Erfi*). The night after this she died, and was buried in the space upon the sea-shore between high and low water marks (*flæðarmali*) as she had given directions; because she would not lay in unconsecrated ground, (*moldu*), since she was baptised.

The following is the passage in the original Icelandic:—  
*“Audr var vegskona mikil, þá er hún var ellimóð, bauð hun til sín frændum sínum ok mágum ok bjo djrlega veizla; en er þrjár nætr hafði veizlan staðit, þá valdi hún gjafir vinum sínum ok réð þeim heilvæði; sagði hún at þá skyldi standa veizlan enn iii nætr; hún kvað þat vera skyldu erfi sitt; þá nótt eptir andaðist hún, ok var grafín í flæðarmáli, sem hún hafði fyrir sagt, þvíat hún uildi sigi liggja í óvígðri moldu, er hún var skírð.”\**

“Baud,” invited, in this passage corresponds with the old word “bid,” last *bad*, or *bade*, which was used for inviting to a funeral, and the district of those invited was, and sometimes still is in Cumberland, called a “bidding.” We have the same old word in the Liturgy, in the bidding or invitatory prayer.

“Mold,” the word here used for earth in the burial, finds a parallel in a Cumberland phrase for “inter,” which is to *put in the mould*:—*Flæðarmá*, is the space between high and low water marks, and, I may remark, as a parallel to this case of *Audr*, the superstition that has so often prevailed in Cumberland in individuals as to whether they would or would not be interred in consecrated ground.

“*Flæðar*” is the gen. of *flæðr*, *f.*, the flood or high tide.

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\* In this Icelandic passage I have put in italics every word that seems allied to, or identical with, the dialect. They amount in this short passage to thirty-seven.—T.E.

It is in other parts of Iceland called "Flöd," and on the Cumberland shores of the Solway the tide was, since I remember, in some parts always spoken of as the *flood*. "Valdi," here used, means in Icelandic *to select*. We have the same word in the dialect in *wheel*, *to pick out* or *select*, as of apples, the sortings of which are called "out-weels."

The word "Erfi," which is used in the original as the name of this funeral banquet is, I think, worthy of note in this connection:—Arfr, meant the inheritance or patrimony, and "arf-sal" was a law term, signifying the handing over of one's property to another man on condition of getting succour or support for life. Hence Audr's funeral banquet, under the name "erfi," was a sort of passing over of her possessions to her heirs and successors, and finds an exact correspondence in what was called the "arval," or funeral banquet in Cumberland and North Lancashire, where the friends and neighbours of the family of the deceased were invited to dinner on the day of the interment, and this was called the "arval dinner," a solemn festival to exculpate the heir and those entitled to the possessions of the deceased from the mulcts or fines of the lord of the manor, and from all accusation of having used violence.

In later times the word acquired a wider application, and was used to designate the meals provided at funerals generally; and this word, the arval, or funeral dinner, has in the dialect come down nearly to our own time.

Mr. Magnússon kindly sent me a note upon this subject, in which he says that "arval" has its nearest etymological equivalent in modern Danish "arveøl," from the old form *arfa öl*=the inheritors' ale.

With regard to place-names, there is a remarkable correspondence in form and meaning between the place-names of Iceland and those of the three northern counties which I have especially named in my paper.

I have said that there are in all 1,949 place-names, or farm-names, in the list at the end of the Landnáma Bók. Some of these must be discounted as applying to other countries or districts than Iceland, but after all a very great proportion remain of what are purely Icelandic place-names; and in addition to this I have here a large map of Iceland as it was in the twelfth century, and this will, therefore, serve to illustrate that period of the Landnáma Bók. I have copied those place-names as fully as I could, and they correspond in a remarkable degree to the place-names that we find in Cumberland, Westmorland, and North Lancashire.

Ness, Frith, Vik,\* and Sand, fringe every portion of the map of Iceland. "Dale," is found continually in Iceland,—Broad-dale, Lang-dale, Deep-dale, Reek-dale, and Swin-dale are instances, some of which occur more than once. Anent this last name Swindale, as we have it also in Lakeland, it may not be uninteresting to read why the Icelandic Swindale was first so named. The following passage occurs at p. 177 of the Landnáma Bók :—"Ingimund lost ten swine, and found them in the autumn of the following year in Swindale, where there were then one hundred swine." It goes on to speak about the boar leaping into a pool, called therefrom "Swine's Pool." The Icelandic word here used for "boar" is significant, for it is *göltr* for the masculine, *gyltr* for the feminine, and in Cumberland a young swine is still called a gilt pig.

Thor gives the origin to numerous place-names and surnames, as will be especially illustrated by some of the passages I have illustrated.

In Iceland, as in Cumberland, there is a kaldá, or cold stream. There is also in Iceland the White river and

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\* "Vik" is a bight or bay, and a glance at the Ordnance Map will show that it is used once or twice in this sense in the bays or openings on the Lake of Windermere.—T.E.

Laxá,\* or the salmon river, and those bearing the name of *sands and skerries* seem to be as numerous as those to be found upon our own shores. The kind of dwelling they originally built in the settlement there, as here, sometimes goes to form the name.

Thus there is Tentstead and Tentness, as in Lakeland we have Tent Lodge and Tent Cottage. The word "skali," in the Icelandic meant a shed, a hut—the Engl. sheal, shealing, and as such it seems to form the original of several place-names in Iceland. We have it also as a common noun in Lakeland for a similar shed or enclosure, for storing turf is called a peat-scale, and the Skalafell, Skalawood, Skalamyre, and Skalanes of Iceland, may remind us of the Scales—Geitscale, Nether Scales, Scale Hill, and Bowscale of our own land.

"Gard" is an enclosure; we have it as a common noun in the Bible of Ulphilas, where in the 10th John sheepfold is translated gardr; and gard, or gardr, as an enclosure, occurs in many place-names in the map of Iceland, and is represented by proper names in "gards" and "garth," to be found very frequently in our own neighbourhood, and Stackgarth and Kurkgarth, used as common nouns in our dialect, correspond in sound and meaning with Stackgard and Kurkgard in Iceland.

There is a Kirkfell in Iceland, as in Lakeland, and there are names that remind us of their demons as well as of their divinities. "Troll" is their name for fiend or giant, and Trollsheim and Trollsdwelling, as they are applied to the Icelandic mountains, remind us of the supposed whereabouts of those fiends or giants, and Fiends' Fell, the former name of Cross Fell, supplies a parallel from our own mountains; and there is a bay called Ker-

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\* Laxa, or salmon river, may remind us of Laxey in the Isle of Man. "Lax" is the Icelandic for salmon, and till lately salmon weirs were at times called *lax* weirs in the north of England.—T.E.

linger

linger, or Old Woman's, or Witches Frith, because (says the Landnáma Bók) when Eysteinn, the son of Thorsteinn, attempted to land there, a witch drove his ship back into the frith. This word "kerling" has found a habitat in the north of our island, for in Scotland the word "karline" is an old woman or witch. "Gufa," in Icelandic, is steam or vapour, and occurs in Gufu nes, Gufu dale, and Gufu scale—proper names which doubtless derive their origin from the steam or hot wells in the neighbourhood. The modern Icelandic preserves it in Gufa-batr, a steamboat, and a vapouring fellow in Cumberland used to be called a great "guff."

I have been speaking of proper names. I may say a word in conclusion about what I suppose would not inaptly be called improper names. The Landnáma Bok abounds in nick-names, every kind of personal peculiarity, almost every shade of complexion, every kind of defect and deformity, a man's tidiness or untidiness, whether he was long or short, fat or lean, flat-footed or the opposite, good, bad, or indifferent—all seem to have been represented by an epithet placed immediately after his baptismal name, and in that position as a personal appellative to have stuck on to him through life. It stuck to him better than a degree sticks to some people, and in many instances in the Landnáma Bók it would seem to be the only name by which he was generally known. Anyone who knew the Cumberland villages forty or fifty years ago, or earlier still, needs not to be reminded that in this particular they were not far behind the Norsemen. Anderson's "Kursmas Eve" or Mark Lonsdale's "Upshot" supply such Cumberland nicknames in abundance. This last is the free sketch of a Cumberland upshot, and was taken in 1780. In the notes upon the original edition of the "Upshot" there is the following reference to these nicknames:—"These bye-titles are so far from giving offence that the parties themselves admit them

them on all occasions, and sometimes use them in writing."

In some villages there was hardly a person who was not designated by such an epithet, and as in Iceland it got to be almost the only name by which he was known.

A careful analysis and comparison of some of those names in Iceland shows that in some instances they became surnames, and in the case of their posterity they were handed down as the only family surname by which their descendants were known.

One nickname in the *Landnáma Bók* reminds us of a very curious custom in Iceland. There are three men spoken of there whose nicknames are *Hólmgöngu Starri*, *Hólmgöngu Mani*, and *Hólmgöngu Rafn*. They were so named because they had fought in the *Holmgang*. This *Holmgang* was the Icelandic wager of battle. The combatants went alone to a holm or island, and fought until one of them was wounded or dead. The holm gang was therefore a kind of court of final appeal or ordeal, and whenever a Thing or parliament was assembled, an islet or holm was appointed near to it as the place for the holm gang or wager of battle, and throughout the *Landnáma Bók* it is spoken of as something well known and admitted. About A.D. 1006 this wager of battle or holm gang was abolished on account of an unfortunate feud between two of their well known leaders. The word "holm," is apparently as a proper and a common noun, used as generally in Iceland as in Lakeland, and it has in both cases exactly the same meaning, namely, that of an islet, especially in a bay, creek, or river, and even meadows on the shore with ditches behind them are, in both countries, called holmes.

Such then is some of the evidence, however imperfectly rendered, that I have to tender of the affinities between the Language, Place-names, Folklore, and Antiquities derived from the oldest and best authenticated record of  
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the ancient Norsemen, and the Language, Place Names, Folklore, and Antiquities of those three counties in which your Society carries on its valuable and interesting work.

Icelandic is certainly the most unchanged and characteristic form of the language of the Norsemen.

The Landnama Book is the truest type of its earliest records, and the writers of it are placed in the very front rank of their historians.

I have done what little I could to translate some portion of that record, and I hope that abler hands, with greater resources, may soon translate the whole of it with an especial view to showing its bearing upon the Dialect, Place-names, and Folklore of our northern counties.

But with what I have done, I have little hesitation in saying that the language of our three northern counties, so far as it is or has been a distinctive language, is founded upon a Norse original, that our place-names have the most close and striking affinities and at times also identities with the place-names of Iceland, as recorded in the Landnama Book. That the Scandinavian mythology enters very largely into our folklore and superstitions, and that the unwritten history contained in the stones and megaliths to be found upon our mountains, will, as it is better interpreted, point still more and more clearly to the doom circles and religious places of assembly that were first founded by the Norse.

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