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NOTES.

Page xiv.

"BUT bade Thorarin take heed lest the hair that lay on his tongue should twine around his head."

This prophetically obscure passage is, no doubt, to be explained on the following grounds. There is an adj. "loðmæltry," from "loðinn," hairy, and "mæla," to speak, thick of speech, talking thick, talking through the roof of the palate. There is also the saying, "ein-hverjum vefst tunga um höfuð," the tongue twines itself round one's head, i.e., brings him into such a trouble as may cost him his head. Thus, when the rough and ready missionary Thangbrand was on his way to the Althing, Thorvald the Wily gathered a band against him, and with a rhyme, in which he lampooned Thangbrand, called on the poet Wolf Uggison to join him; but the poet refused and sent him this message: "Gæti hann, at honum vefizt eigi tungan um höfuð," let him take heed lest his tongue cost him his head" (Njála, ch. 102). The warning was not heeded, and Thangbrand and his companion Gudleif slew Thorvald. Accordingly, the meaning of Guest's words above should be: Let Thorarin beware lest his thick-speaking, wagging tongue may cost him his head.

Page xxxii. "Thorvald . . . took part in the burning of Thorkel, the son of Blundketil." On this and other disagreements between Islendingabók and Hen Thorir's saga, as, in fact, on the relation of Hen Thorir's saga in general to other historical records of Iceland, Dr. K. Maurer has written a searching and exhaustive criticism in Abhandlungen der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philos.-philol. Classe, Bd. XII., 2, 1870, pp. 159-216.
Moonberg, Mánaberg, the dwelling of the alleged Liót Thiodreksón, would seem to have been situated somewhere in Icefirth, further out or down the firth than Laugaból (Bathstead, p. 38). Only two such local names can be pointed to, one on the island of Vigr, which lies some miles westward, or down the firth, from Laugaból, the other on the so-called Snowfell-strand just opposite to the island of Eiderisle, and that too is lying further west, or down the firth, than Laugaból. In the isle of Vigr this homestead of the saga cannot be sought, because the saga gives us clearly to understand that it was on the mainland itself. But there would be nothing in the way of fixing its locality opposite to Eiderisle, on the northern side of Icefirth. Now in his Járðabók, estate valuation register, made in the course of 1702-1714, Arni Magnússon states that Mánaberg is the name of the place where now the out-dairy from Eiderisle is situate. Dr. Kálund has not been able to trace any recollection of the name among the present inhabitants of Snowfell-strand. But in 1805, according Johnsen’s Járðatal, p. 202, the name was still known in this neighbourhood. If this name can be supposed to represent the old homestead, then Mánaberg would have stood between Mýrifjörður and Unaðs dalr (see preface and map), and Howard dwelling west of the former house would have been in a manner sheltered against attacks from Moonberg Liót. There is nothing seriously in the way of supposing that a homestead called Moonberg might have stood here in the days of Howard the Halt.

"He" (Thorkel of Eiderisle) “was the Lawman of those of Icefirth.” Only here and in the saga of the Svarfardardale men is mention made of this functionary during the period of the commonweal. In both cases the lögmaðr is invested with judicial authority. But in the earlier laws the term only means a lawyer, an expert at law. First after the union with Norway, A.D. 1262-64, the lögmaðr comes in as a magistrate appointed by the king. It seems, perhaps, strange that in independent
Iceland there should have been no local magistrates to settle contested points of law and right, as there were both in Norway and Sweden. But the matter is to a great extent explained by the fact that any man, who was, or felt himself to be, either wronged or feebly defended by the Goði whose liegeman, þingmaðr, he was, could transfer his allegiance to any other Goði he pleased. The saga leaves it unexplained why Howard did not do so, he being Thorbiorn's "thingman" (ch. vii. p. 24), until he had wrought his deed of revenge, when he threw himself under the protection of Eyolf the Gray. But the locality itself, where travelling is almost impossible but by sea, together with Thorbiorn's great power, were obvious obstacles in the way of such an arrangement. As for the term lawman—lögmaðr—being used here, it probably means only that the author of the saga, forgetful or ignorant of the past, foisted an institution of the thirteenth century upon the constitution of the eleventh. It must here be noted that all the law we have been dealing with is customary, as opposed to political law; it has no definite executive at its back; the aggrieved person and his kindred or chieftain are left to carry out its decisions if they can. Again, the "judges" are not, like the judges of political society, representatives of the executive power of the State, but are, in fact, our jurymen. We may say, in short, that the chief difference between the Customary and Political law is, that in the former, judgment withdraws protection from the condemned; in the latter, execution follows judgment inevitably.

Page 3, l. 25. Bear's-warmth, bjarn-ylr, refers to the exceeding warmth which people supposed was given to the blood of a bear. In old records we are not aware that any description of this quality of bears exists. But in the east of Iceland the legend is current still, that so great is the warmth of this animal that, walking over the snow in whatever frosty weather, it leaves a pool of water in every step. This is supposed to be the bear's-
warmth proper, and it can be transmitted to human beings who are born on a bear's fell. (Islenzkar þjóðsögur, vol. i. p. 608.)

Page 4, l. 4. Sheep-walks, afréttir, mountain pastures owned in common mostly by so and so many communes, more rarely by private people. Unto these the dry sheep were driven in spring from the home-pastures, and through these commons they roamed unlooked after till the end of September, when the communes sent out their sheep-gatherers to clear the walks. The sheep were driven down to one common fold, where they were sorted by the marks cut on their ears, and afterwards driven in separate droves to their respective owners. Meantime, there are no upland sheep-walks to clear in the locality to which the saga refers.

Page 4, l. 6. Winter-nights, vetrnætr. The summer began on a Thursday, and consequently closed on a Wednesday. But the winter began on the Saturday following. The intervening Thursday and Friday were the winter-nights proper. The first day of summer was the Thursday that fell on April 9-15, and the last was the Wednesday that fell on October 7-13. The winter-nights fell respectively on October 8-9 to October 14-15; Saturday, the first day of winter, fell on October 10-16, but in domestic computation the 14th of October was regarded as the first day of winter, as the 14th of April was that of summer.

Page 13, l. 11. "Thorbiorn rode to the Thing a-wooing, and craved the sister of Guest Oddleifson." This is a mistake, as the fragment of Howard's saga which we have given in the preface, xiii-xv, out of the Landnámabók shows. Thorbiorn had for wife Halldis, the sister of Liot, who dwelt at Ingialdsand. Both Liot and Guest went by the popular surname, "hin spaki," which properly means "the tranquil," but is always applied to those who had the gift of prophecy, an imperturbable insight into the deep mysteries of fate. The part which the saga makes Guest "hin spaki" play in Thorbiorn's
affairs is evidently transferred to him from his less-known surname namesake, Liot "hinn spaki."

Page 16, l. 26. "Now Thordis, Thorbiorn's sister, went out that morning of the fight, and heard the noise thereof, but might not see aught." Here is one more instance of the author's ignorance of local details. First Olaf is made to go "út með fírðinum," out or down along the firth, instead of "inn með fírðinum," up along the firth, since Howardstead was west of Loonsere, and consequently this place was "inn með fírði," up along the firth in the direction from Howardstead. Secondly, Thorbiorn landed just below Loonsere, and there the fight befell, but Thordis' home, Knoll, was more than two miles distant, up along the western side of Kaldalón (see map), so she could neither hear nor see aught of the fight. About the locality of Olaf's fight Dr. Kálund says: "From the homestead the homefield stretches over a brent that leans down towards the 'ere' (above which Loonsere stands) and covers the uppermost part of the ere. Immediately down below the brent, in the midst of the green level field, is to be seen a cairn, heaped up of foreshore stones of the size of a man's fist, which presents a striking contrast to its surroundings. It is called 'Olaf's ruin,' Olafs rúst, and is accounted of as Olaf's tomb, 'leiði.'"—Beskr. af Island, i. 605.

Page 27, l. 17. In Biargey's ordering Thorhall to "row towards the cutter's beam," which evidently meant that he was to row round Thorbiorn's cutter, beginning the circle from the nearer beam, so as to cross her path, and in Thorbiorn's wrath for her doing this, there must lie hidden an allusion to a popular superstition. The probability is that a person with a good fetch (fylgja, hamingja) crossing the sea-way of him whose fetch was an evil one, ill-luck, was believed thereby to have confounded the evil fetch, and hastened on to ruin the person whom it "followed."

Pages 28-29. Of the brothers of Biargey, Valbrand, Thorbrand, and Asbrand, and of their respective home-
steads, nothing is otherwise known. This journey of Biargey's bears on the face of itself the evidence of being a legendary adornment.

Page 42. All that is here attributed to Steinthor of Ere is, no doubt, as we have shown in the preface, p. xv, due to Eyolf the Gray of Otterdale, who, according to Landnáma, was the chief that safeguarded Howard after his manslaughters.

Pages 45-46. The Thorbiorn of Ere whose sons are called here Grim and Thorstein, is in the Landnámabók called Grim Kögr (Bantling?), living at Brent, Brekka, and his sons are there called Sigurd and Thorkel. Here the confusion must all be on the side of Howard's saga.

Page 51. "Now there was a man named Atli, who dwelt at Otterdale, and was wedded to a sister of Steinthor of Ere, Thordis to wit." All that here is told of Atli the Little is no doubt pure romance. Among the children of Thorlak of Ere, the father of Steinthor, the very saga of the family, the Eyrbyggja saga, knows no daughter of the name of Thordis. But it knows Thordis, Súr's daughter, sister of Gísli Súrson, the great outlaw, whom Eyolf the Gray of Otterdale overcame at last, for which deed Thordis had nearly succeeded in killing Eyolf. It would seem as if the confusion of the Howard saga had gone so far as to join these two in marriage after changing Eyolf the Gray into Atli the Little.

The local confusion here is no less complete: "As goes the tale, the house at Otterdale was far from the highway and stood on the other side of the firth over against Ere." The house of Otterdale stood, as it still stands, far up the firth called Arnar-firth, which is the third considerable bay, counting from the south-westernmost point of the north-western peninsula, Látrabiarg or Biartangar, that cuts into the land. To get by sea to it from Ere, situate on the southern shore of Broadfirth, would mean a sail not far short of a hundred miles, and yet our saga tells us that Atli got up early the same morning that Stein-
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thor left Ere in the cutter taken from Thorbjorn, and then found the boat so near to the landing-place beneath Otterdale, that he recognized Steinthor on board. In fact the saga has removed Ere some fifty miles, as the crow flies, to the north, and planted it on the eastern side of Arnafirth, opposite the house of Otterdale.

Page 67, l. 14. "In those days Earl Hakon ruled over Norway." We have shown, see preface, p. xxii, that the death of Olaf Howardson must have taken place, if not actually in the summer of A.D. 1001, at least a very short time before or after. Now after Olaf's death Howard was a bedridden man from grief for three years (cf. pages 18, 20, 27); then a fourth year passed when Howard's great affairs were settled at the Thing, in the fall of which probably he sold his house in accordance with the award given out by Guest Oddleifson (p. 64), that he should change his dwelling, "and not abide in this quarter of the land." Next he moves to Oxdale and abode there "certain winters" (p. 67), say two or three, and then he hears that Earl Hakon was dead, "and Olaf Tryggvison come to the land and gotten to be sole king of Norway" (p. 68). This news then ought at the earliest to have come to Howard about A.D. 1008, that is, thirteen years after the death of Hakon Sigurdson (ob. 995), and eight years after the death of Olaf Tryggvison (ob. 1000). It is much more likely that the Earl Hakon here meant was Hakon Eirikson, whom Olaf Haraldson (St. Olaf) deposed 1014, he himself a zealous propagator of Christianity, becoming sole king of Norway, 1015.

Page 76, l. 18. Skridinsenni is an exposed bold stretch of coast, facing the east, and running from Bitra or Bitrufirth north to the ness that marks the entrance to Kolla-firth, situate in the southernmost part of the district of the Strands, in wider sense, within the present bailiwick of Strandasýsla. The Glum here mentioned was the grandson of Kjallak, who, according to the Eyrbyggja saga (ed. 1864, ch. 57), lived "at Kjallaksá (-river) of (on) Skridinsenni." By our saga Glum had come, in one way
or another, into the family property at Skridinsenni, though his father Ospak lived at Ere in Bitra. Glum, according to Eyrbyggja, was a "mere youth a few years after Snorri Goði made Saelingsdalstongue his home," which he did A.D. 1008—a statement, by the way, which well agrees with the chronology of the Banded Men's saga, for, in ordinary circumstances, a son of his would have come to man's estate about 1050. It is not reasonable to suppose that Glum would have changed the name of his grandfather's abode on coming into the property. While therefore the property was still in the family, as it undoubtedly was at the time, or at least shortly before the time, that the events of the saga happened, Skridinsenni was a topographical, not a domiciliary term. By the time the saga was written down, perhaps more than two centuries afterwards, the interchange of the names of Kjallaksá and Skridinsenni might have taken place. At any rate, the name of the old house of Kjallaksá has for a long time been Skríðins or Skríðnís or Skríðnes-enni.

Pages 79-80. "Uspak rides to the Thing," etc. "So weareth summer: Uspak rideth to the Leet." The Leet was an assembly called together from the three Goðorð in every Thing; it was held at the same place as the váþing or spring-mote, and was hallowed and ruled, or presided over by one of the three Goðar of the Thing (see below). It was to be held not sooner than fourteen days after the meeting of the Althing closed, that is, from July 16-22. And it might not be held later than on the Sunday following that Saturday on which there still were left eight weeks of summer, that is, on the Sunday which O.S. fell on August 16-22. A Leet might not be shorter than "daytimes-Leet," nor longer than two-days Leet. "It should be hallowed even as Things (lawful assemblies) were hallowed, and withal the right of a man increaseth at an hallowed Leet, even as it doth at a Thing. There at the Leet should all new matters in law be given out, likewise the Calendar and the observance of Ember-days, and the beginning of Lent, so
also if there was leap-year, or if to summer is added,\textsuperscript{1} also if men have to ride to the Althing before ten weeks of summer are passed. This shall be given out by that Godi to whom it is due to hallow the Leet, unless they (the three of them) have otherwise divided it (the Leet business) between them.” Grág. I. a. 111-112.

Page 86, l. 1 (cf. p. 95). Days of summoning, stefnudagar, the days in spring on which summons were taken out for the várpjing, and for the Althing in such cases as were not brought into court at the várpjing. These days are not otherwise defined than as being in spring. But as the rule was that summons for the Spring-thing should run fourteen days, and those for the Althing four or three weeks, the “stefnudagar” for the former, which, at its earliest, could not begin till May 7th, must have fallen on and after April 23rd, for the latter, which began on June 18-24, they must have fallen on May 21st and afterwards. Cf. Grágás I. a. 96: “Let summons for the várpjing not be taken out closer to it than that there be two weeks until that várpjing (meet) unto which the case is summoned.” \textit{Ib.} I. a. 126: “It is right to summon all cases which do not involve levy of jurors from home, to the Althing all the time until the passing of the fifth day of the week, when seven weeks of the summer have gone by,” \textit{i.e.}, until the 28th of May. \textit{Ib.} I. a. 179: “All these cases” (relating to manslaughter, murder, etc., which involved levy from home of jurors) “the plaintiff having had news thereof within four weeks of summer having past, or before, he shall have summoned, at the latest, on the day following that Wednesday, when six weeks of summer are past,” \textit{i.e.}, on May 21st.

Page 94, line 20, read: Gellir Thorkelson.

Page 125, line 2, read: the son of Ulvar the son of Wolf.

\textsuperscript{1} This refers to the characteristic contrivance of the Icelandic calendar called Sumarauki, summer addition, invented by Thorstein Surt, A.D. 960, described in Islendingabók, ch. iv.
Page 125, line 21, read: Geir the Wealthy from Geirsliethe.

Page 126, l. 9. We have rendered Rauða Bjorn by Red Bjorn in order to retain the shortness of the original. But the real rendering would be Red-iron-ore Bjorn. "Rauða" is the gen. sing. of "rauði," red iron ore, hæmatite, for the smelting of which Skallagrim was especially noted (cf. Egil's saga, ch. xxx.). Now Red Bjorn was a settler within Skallagrim's own claim, for he bought land of Skallagrim between Gorgreıver and Steamriver (Gljúfrar ok Gufár), so he probably took up from Skallagrim the craft of smelting hæmatite on his land, and thereby got his nickname "Of the red ore."

Page 126, line 11, read: Gunnwald, father to Thorkel who, etc.

Page 128, l. 16. "And I know that ye shall not away out of the haven before the spring-tide," says Odd-a-Tongue to the Norwegian shipmaster, when he refuses to abide by Odd's fixing of the prices at which only the wares on board might be sold. Blundketil, on knowing who the chapmen were, sent his son, Herstein, "down to the Haven" to bid the master to his house. In the Landnámabók we read (pp. 53-54): "Haven-Worm settled lands about Melahverfi out to Charwater and Salmonwater, and up as far as Duck-Creek-water, and abode in Haven" (see the map). In describing Haven, Höfn, from personal inspection, Dr. Kálund says: "A little to the south from the homestead is formed the small bight, called Belgsholts-Creek. This, it is evident, has given the homestead its name (Haven). The bight can be entered only by high water, all the parts outside being practically laid dry at ebb. Inside the narrow entrance, through which a strong current runs, up towards the cliffs of the strand a pool is formed, a little bend or bow with calm water of some depth, which must have offered a particularly suitable anchorage for small vessels. This inlet, which, no doubt, was pretty frequently used as harbour in ancient times, is especially bespoken in the
saga of Hen Thorir." This corroborates the accuracy of the saga all but completely. The Norway ship has evidently gone to anchor on a spring-tide, and has been too deep-going to get away by neap-tide.

Pages 130-131. The months mentioned here, Thorri, Goi, and One-month—"Einmánuðr"—are the last three of the winter season. The historical year began at this time in Iceland, as practically it did throughout western Christendom, on Christmas day with, in Iceland, its heathen vigil, as it were, Yule eve. But there is every probability that, from the time the office of the speaker-at-law was created, there co-existed with the historical the legal year, that began on the Icelandic midsummer's Sunday, which fell on July 22nd to 28th. It stands to reason, namely, that the speaker, having at the close of each Althing session to deliver to the Goðar the calendar of the ensuing year, in order that they again might publish the same to their thingmen at the Leets in the course of July and August, should have chosen a convenient point of time to start from. The above date was obviously convenient, "Midsummer" being a date term familiar to every peasant in the country. Hence the old order of the months in the vulgar calendar of Iceland:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Old Calendar</th>
<th>New Calendar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Heyannir (Haytoil)</td>
<td>July—August.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Kornskurðarmánuðr, or Twímánuðr (Corn shearing or Twainmonth)</td>
<td>Aug.—September.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Haustmánuðr (Harvest-month)</td>
<td>Sept.—October.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>Gormánuðr (Slaughter-month)</td>
<td>Oct.—November.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>Frermánuðr (Frost-month)</td>
<td>Nov.—December.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>Hrútmanduðr or Mörsugur (Ram-month or Fat-sucker)</td>
<td>Dec.—January.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>Thorri</td>
<td>Jan.—February.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII.</td>
<td>Goi</td>
<td>Feb.—March.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IX. Einmánúðr (One [ = last Winter-] month) . . . March—April.
X. Gaukmánúðr (Cuckoo) or Sátíðr (Seedtime) or Harpa (Harp = Songbirds'-month?) . . . . . . April—May.
XI. Eggtíð (Eggtime) or Stekktíðí May—June.
XII. Sólmánúðr or Selmánúðr (Sun or Dairy-month) . . June—July.

Only Thorri, Gogi, Einmánúðr, and Tvímánúðr are mentioned in the sagas. All the months are enumerated in Snorra Edda's Skáldskaparmál (S. E., i. 510-512), only Snorri starts with "Haustmánúðr," which began about the autumnal equinox, Sept. 20-26; but that is not to be taken to mean that he regarded "Haustmánúðr" as the first month of the year. In collecting for the use of poets the various terms for divisions of time, he comes to the terms of the seasons, and starts from the autumnal equinox; so, in order to keep to the logical nexus of his argument, he begins his enumeration of the months from the same time mark. But we may also mention that the oldest computistic treatise in Icelandic literature (Cod. Reg., 1812, 4to., Royal Lib. Copenh.) starts its enumeration of the months with September, on the ground that it is the first month in the cycle of the Epacts, the term meant being September 23. Did Snorri Sturluson actually handle this precious volume, which, as it now exists, was written at least forty years before his death, and base on it his list of the months?

Page 152, l. 15 foll. "So when the boards were set, Herstein the bridegroom leapt up and over the board to where was a certain stone; then he set one foot upon the stone and spake: 'This oath I swear hereby, that be-

1 "Stekkr," a fold for young lambs. The period from the time the ewes lamb (May) till the time of the so-called "fráæfur," when the lambs are weaned from the dams (end of June), is popularly called "stekktíð." During that time the lambs are kept at night inside a fold under roof
fore the Althing is over this summer I shall have Arngrim the priest made fully guilty, or gained self-doom else,' etc.

This is one of the many instances we meet with in the Icelandic sagas of solemn vows, usually of a desperate character, being made on festive occasions. Already in the ancient lay of Helgi Hiorvardson (Older Edda) the custom is mentioned: “King Hiorvard had made a vow to this end that he should marry the goodliest woman he should come to know of.” In Ynglinga saga (ch. 40), a very interesting description is given of the ceremony observed when vows were taken in style, as it were. Ingjald the Evil-minded, the Over-king at Upsala, on succeeding his father, made a great “arvel,” feast, to which he invited six neighbouring kinglets, for whom he had six high seats fitted up in a new banqueting hall. “It was a wont of those days, when an arvel was to be made after kings or earls, that he who made the feast and was to be ‘lead to heritage’ should sit on the ledge (footstool) before the high seat all the time until the bringing in of that bumper which was called ‘Bragi’s Bumper.’ Then he must rise up against Bragi’s Bumper, and make a vow and quaff the bumper afterwards. Thereupon he should be led to the high seat that was his father’s; and then he had come into all the heritage the father had left. Now in this same wise this was done here. And when Bragi’s Bumper came in, King Ingjald rose and took in hand a mighty horn of a wild ox, and he made the vow that he should widen out his kingdom by half towards every side or else die. Whereupon he quaffed off the horn. And when men were drunk in the evening, King Ingjald spake to Folkvid and Hulvid, the sons of Svipdag, and bade them be-weapon themselves and their men even as had been settled earlier in the evening. So they went out to the new hall and brought fire up to it, and therewith it began to burn. And therewithin there burned six kings with all their folk, but those who sought to get out were
swiftly cut down. Thereupon King Ingjald made himself master of all the lands these kings had owned, and gathered tribute from them."

A wiser vow, made for a nobler end, was that of Herstein, the son of Earl Atli the Slender of Gaular in Norway, as recorded in the Flóamanna saga (Fornsögur, Leipzig, 1860, p. 121). Ingolf, son of Örn, the first settler in Iceland, together with his foster-brother Leif (Hiorleif), invited the sons of the earl, Hastein and Herstein, to a banquet, at which Herstein cast fond glances at Helga, the sister of Ingolf, "the goodliest and the best-mannered of women," and made a vow that he would have for wife or no woman else. "Said he, he had been the first to begin this play, 'and now, Ingolf, it is thy turn,' quoth he. Answered Ingolf: 'Let Herstein now have his say first, for he is the wisest of us, and the first in all matters whatsoever.' Then Hastein said: 'This vow I make that, though I be beholden to men, I shall not twist a right judgment aside if the same be entrusted to me on faith.' Said Herstein: 'This vow of thine is not at all by so much the more discreet that thou art counted wiser than we are, or what dost thou mean to do, if thou hast to give out an award concerning friends or foes?" Hastein answered: 'Thereto I mean to see myself.' As it happened, his next award was to deprive the foster-brothers of their lands and goods, and to exile them from their country of Firdir, an award which was the immediate cause of Iceland being settled.

The blind belief in the sanctity and inviolability of these vows, once made, no matter how unwisely, is well illustrated by the story of the vow of Hrafinkel Frey's priest (Hrafinkelssaga, pp. 5 and 8): "Hrafinkel owned a choice thing which he prized above whatever else; it was a horse which he called Frey-Faxe. Half of that horse he gave to his friend Frey. For this horse he had so great a love that he made a vow to put to death anyone who durst ride it without his leave. . . . In the
morning he has a horse fetched and saddled, and rode up to the mountain dairy. In blue raiment he rode, axe in hand, but with no more of weapons. Then Einar (his shepherd) had just driven the ewes into the fold and lay on the wall thereof counting his flock while the women were a-milking. They (his servants) greeted him, and he asked how they were getting on. ‘It has gone awkwardly with me,’ said Einar, ‘I have missed thirty ewes for a week, but have now found them at last.’ Hrafinkel said he had no fault to find on that score. ‘But hast thou not done something worse? Didst thou not have a ride on Faxe the other day?’ Einar said he might not gainsay that utterly. ‘Why didst thou ride on this horse which was forbidden thee, seeing thou hadst plenty of other horses to choose from, which thou wast free to use? Now I should have forgiven thee this one case, had I not made such a solemn vow about it already, because, moreover, thou hast owned to it in a manly wise.’ But whereas he believed that such men who should break their own vows never would come to aught good, he leapt off his horse and upon Einar and dealt him a death-wound then and there."

Numerous other instances might be added, notably the famous vows of the Jomsvikings, which brought them to their ruin in the reputed battle of Hiorungavog against Earl Hakon of Norway, about A.D. 994 (Jomsvikinga saga); King Harold Hairfair’s vow (Heimskringla); Hroald Haraldson’s, the bow-breaker’s (Hord Grimkelson’s saga), Emperor Otto the First’s (Jomsvikinga saga), etc.

Page 161, l. 25. “My handmaidens.” His arrows, to wit. For the “sleep-thorn,” here used for the long sleep of death, see Volsunga saga, chap. xx.