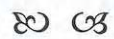
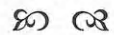


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The Vinland History of the Flat Island Book

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The Vinland History
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Flat Island Book

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THE VINLAND HISTORY OF THE FLAT ISLAND BOOK¹

*A Brief History of Eric the Red.*²— There was a man named Thorvald, a son of Osvald, Ulf's son, Eyxna-Thori's son. Thorvald and Eric the Red, his son, left Jaederen [in Norway], on account of manslaughter, and went to Iceland. At that time Iceland was extensively colonized. They first lived at Drangar on Horn-strands, and there Thorvald died. Eric then married Thorhild, the daughter of Jorund and Thorbiorg the Ship-chested, who was then married to Thorbiorn of the Haukadal family. Eric then removed from the north, and made his home at Ericsstadir by Vatnshorn. Eric and Thorhild's son was called Leif.

After the killing of Eyiulf the Foul, and Duelling-Hrafn, Eric was banished from Haukadal, and betook himself westward to Breidafirth, settling in Eyxney at Ericsstadir. He loaned his outer daïs-boards to Thorgest, and could not get these again when he demanded them. This gave rise to broils and battles between himself and Thorgest, as Eric's Saga relates. Eric was backed in the dispute by Styr Thorgrimson, Eyiulf of Sviney, the sons of Brand of Alptafirth and Thorbiorn Vifilsson, while the Thorgesters were upheld by the sons of Thord the Yeller and Thorgeir of Hitardal. Eric was declared an outlaw at Thorsnessting. He thereupon equipped his ship for a voyage, in Ericsvag, and when he was ready to sail, Styr and the others accompanied him out beyond the islands. Eric told them, that it was his purpose to go in search

¹ Reeves's translation. In *Origines Islandicae*, Vol. II., p. 598, this saga is called "The Story of the Wineland Voyages, commonly called The Story of Eric the Red."

² The original word for "Brief History" also means "section," "episode," "little story," *i.e.*, extract or abbreviated account.

of that country which Gunnbiorn, son of Ulf the Crow, had seen, when he was driven westward across the main, at the time when he discovered Gunnbiorns-skerries; he added, that he would return to his friends, if he should succeed in finding this country. Eric sailed out from Snæfellsíokul, and found the land. He gave the name of Midiokul to his landfall; this is now called Blacksark. From thence he proceeded southward along the coast, in search of habitable land. He passed the first winter at Ericsey, near the middle of the Eastern Settlement, and the following spring he went to Ericsfirth, where he selected a dwelling-place. In the summer he visited the western uninhabited country, and assigned names to many of the localities. The second winter he remained at Holmar by Hrafnsgnipa, and the third summer he sailed northward to Snæfell, and all the way into Hrafnfirth; then he said he had reached the head of Ericsfirth. He then returned and passed the third winter in Ericsey at the mouth of Ericsfirth. The next summer he sailed to Iceland, landing in Breidafirth. He called the country, which he had discovered, Greenland, because, he said, people would be attracted thither, if the country had a good name. Eric spent the winter in Iceland, and the following summer set out to colonize the country. He settled at Brattahlid in Ericsfirth, and learned men say, that in this same summer, in which Eric set out to settle Greenland, thirty-five ships sailed out of Breidafirth and Borgarfirth; fourteen of these arrived there safely, some were driven back and some were lost. This was fifteen years before Christianity was legally adopted in Iceland.¹ During the same summer Bishop Frederick² and Thorvald Kodransson went abroad [from Iceland]. Of those men, who accompanied Eric to Greenland, the following took possession of land there: Heriulf, Heriulfsfirth, he dwelt at Heriulfsness; Ketil, Ketils-

¹ About 985 (983-986). One vellum of the *Landnama-bok* (Book of Settlements) says sixteen, the other fifteen years.

² Bishop Frederick was from "Saxland" (Saxony). According to the *Kristni-Saga* he came to Iceland "in the summer when the land had been settled one-hundred-and-seven winters," *i.e.*, in 981. He made but little headway in preaching Christianity.

firth; Hrafn, Hrafnfirth; Solvi, Solvadal; Helgi Thorbrands-son, Alptafirth; Thorbiorn Gleamer, Siglufirth; Einar, Einarsfirth; Hafgrim, Hafgrimsfirth and Vatnahverfi; Arnlaug, Arnlaugsfirth; while some went to the Western Settlement.

Leif the Lucky Baptized. — After that sixteen winters had lapsed, from the time when Eric the Red went to colonize Greenland, Leif, Eric's son, sailed out from Greenland to Norway. He arrived in Drontheim in the autumn, when King Olaf Tryggvason was come down from the north, out of Hala-goland. Leif put in to Nidaros with his ship, and set out at once to visit the king. King Olaf expounded the faith to him, as he did to other heathen men who came to visit him. It proved easy for the king to persuade Leif, and he was accordingly baptized, together with all of his shipmates. Leif remained throughout the winter with the king, by whom he was well entertained.

Biarni goes in Quest of Greenland. — Heriulf was a son of Bard Heriulfsson. He was a kinsman of Ingolf, the first colonist. Ingolf allotted land to Heriulf between Vag and Reykianess, and he dwelt at first at Drepstokk. Heriulf's wife's name was Thorgerd, and their son, whose name was Biarni, was a most promising man. He formed an inclination for voyaging while he was still young, and he prospered both in property and public esteem. It was his custom to pass his winters alternately abroad and with his father. Biarni soon became the owner of a trading-ship, and during the last winter that he spent in Norway, [his father] Heriulf determined to accompany Eric on his voyage to Greenland, and made his preparations to give up his farm. Upon the ship with Heriulf was a Christian man from the Hebrides, he it was who composed the Sea-Rollers' Song, which contains this stave:¹

Mine adventure to the Meek One,
Monk-heart-searcher, I commit now;
He, who heaven's halls doth govern,
Hold the hawk's-seat ever o'er me!

¹ *Hafgerdingar* (sea-rollers) are supposed to have been earthquake waves, and the lines evidently refer to such tidal-waves caused by an unusually

Heriulf settled at Heriulfsness, and was a most distinguished man. Eric the Red dwelt at Brattahlid, where he was held in the highest esteem, and all men paid him homage. These were Eric's children: Leif, Thorvald, and Thorstein, and a daughter whose name was Freydis; she was wedded to a man named Thorvard, and they dwelt at Gardar, where the episcopal seat now is. She was a very haughty woman, while Thorvard was a man of little force of character, and Freydis had been wedded to him chiefly because of his wealth. At that time the people of Greenland were heathen.

Biarni arrived with his ship at Eyraar [in Iceland] in the summer of the same year, in the spring of which his father had sailed away. Biarni was much surprised when he heard this news, and would not discharge his cargo. His shipmates inquired of him what he intended to do, and he replied that it was his purpose to keep to his custom, and make his home for the winter with his father; "and I will take the ship to Greenland, if you will bear me company." They all replied that they would abide by his decision. Then said Biarni, "Our voyage must be regarded as foolhardy, seeing that no one of us has ever been in the Greenland Sea." Nevertheless they put out to sea when they were equipped for the voyage, and sailed for three days, until the land was hidden by the water, and then the fair wind died out, and north winds arose, and fogs, and they knew not whither they were drifting, and thus it lasted for many "dœgr." Then they saw the sun again, and were able to determine the quarters of the heavens; they hoisted sail, and sailed that "dœgr" through before they saw land. They discussed among themselves what land it could be, and Biarni said that he did not believe that it could be Greenland. They asked whether he wished to sail to this land or not. "It is my counsel" [said he], "to sail close to the land." They did so, and soon saw that the land was level, and covered with woods, and that there were small hillocks

severe earthquake in the year 986. See Reeves, p. 180, (63). The prose sense of the stave is: "I beg the blessed friend of the monks to further our voyage. May the Lord of the heavens hold his hand over me."

upon it. They left the land on their larboard, and let the sheet turn toward the land. They sailed for two "dœgr" before they saw another land. They asked whether Biarni thought this was Greenland yet. He replied that he did not think this any more like Greenland than the former, "because in Greenland there are said to be many great ice-mountains." They soon approached this land, and saw that it was a flat and wooded country. The fair wind failed them then, and the crew took counsel together, and concluded that it would be wise to land there, but Biarni would not consent to this. They alleged that they were in need of both wood and water. "Ye have no lack of either of these," says Biarni — a course, forsooth, which won him blame among his shipmates. He bade them hoist sail, which they did, and turning the prow from the land they sailed out upon the high seas, with southwesterly gales, for three "dœgr," when they saw the third land; this land was high and mountainous, with ice-mountains upon it. They asked Biarni then whether he would land there, and he replied that he was not disposed to do so, "because this land does not appear to me to offer any attractions." Nor did they lower their sail, but held their course off the land, and saw that it was an island. They left this land astern, and held out to sea with the same fair wind. The wind waxed amain, and Biarni directed them to reef, and not to sail at a speed unbefitting their ship and rigging. They sailed now for four "dœgr," when they saw the fourth land. Again they asked Biarni whether he thought this could be Greenland or not. Biarni answers, "This is likest Greenland, according to that which has been reported to me concerning it, and here we will steer to the land." They directed their course thither, and landed in the evening, below a cape upon which there was a boat, and there, upon this cape, dwelt Heriulf,¹ Biarni's father, whence the cape took its name, and was afterwards called Her-

¹ "Certainly a marvellous coincidence, but it is quite in character with the no less surprising accuracy with which the explorers of this history [*i.e.*, the Flat Island Book narrative] succeeded in finding 'Leif's-booths' in a country which was as strange to them as Greenland to Biarni." (Reeves.)

iulfsness. Biarni now went to his father, gave up his voyaging, and remained with his father while Heriulf lived, and continued to live there after his father.

Here begins the Brief History of the Greenlanders. — Next to this is now to be told how Biarni Heriulfsson came out from Greenland on a visit to Earl Eric,¹ by whom he was well received. Biarni gave an account of his travels [upon the occasion] when he saw the lands, and the people thought that he had been lacking in enterprise, since he had no report to give concerning these countries, and the fact brought him reproach. Biarni was appointed one of the Earl's men, and went out to Greenland the following summer. There was now much talk about voyages of discovery. Leif, the son of Eric the Red, of Brattahlid, visited Biarni Heriulfsson and bought a ship of him, and collected a crew, until they formed altogether a company of thirty-five men. Leif invited his father, Eric, to become the leader of the expedition, but Eric declined, saying that he was then stricken in years, and adding that he was less able to endure the exposure of sea-life than he had been. Leif replied that he would nevertheless be the one who would be most apt to bring good luck, and Eric yielded to Leif's solicitation, and rode from home when they were ready to sail. When he was but a short distance from the ship, the horse which Eric was riding stumbled, and he was thrown from his back and wounded his foot, whereupon he exclaimed, "It is not designed for me to discover more lands than the one in which we are now living, nor can we now continue longer together." Eric returned home to Brattahlid, and Leif pursued his way to the ship with his companions, thirty-five men; one of the company was a German named Tyrker. They put the ship in order, and when they were ready, they sailed out to sea, and found first that land which Biarni and his ship-mates found last. They sailed up to the land and cast anchor, and launched a boat and went ashore, and saw no grass there; great ice mountains lay inland back from the sea, and it was as a [table-land of] flat rock all the way from the sea to the ice moun-

¹ Earl Eric ruled in Norway from 1000 to 1015.

tains, and the country seemed to them to be entirely devoid of good qualities. Then said Leif, "It has not come to pass with us in regard to this land as with Biarni, that we have not gone upon it. To this country I will now give a name, and call it Helluland." They returned to the ship, put out to sea, and found a second land. They sailed again to the land, and came to anchor, and launched the boat, and went ashore. This was a level wooded land, and there were broad stretches of white sand, where they went, and the land was level by the sea. Then said Leif, "This land shall have a name after its nature, and we will call it Markland." They returned to the ship forthwith, and sailed away upon the main with north-east winds, and were out two "dœgr" before they sighted land. They sailed toward this land, and came to an island which lay to the northward off the land. There they went ashore and looked about them, the weather being fine, and they observed that there was dew upon the grass, and it so happened that they touched the dew with their hands, and touched their hands to their mouths, and it seemed to them that they had never before tasted anything so sweet as this. They went aboard their ship again and sailed into a certain sound, which lay between the island and a cape, which jutted out from the land on the north, and they stood in westering past the cape. At ebb-tide there were broad reaches of shallow water there, and they ran their ship aground there, and it was a long distance from the ship to the ocean; yet were they so anxious to go ashore that they could not wait until the tide should rise under their ship, but hastened to the land, where a certain river flows out from a lake. As soon as the tide rose beneath their ship, however, they took the boat and rowed to the ship, which they conveyed up the river, and so into the lake, where they cast anchor and carried their hammocks ashore from the ship, and built themselves booths there. They afterwards determined to establish themselves there for the winter, and they accordingly built a large house. There was no lack of salmon there either in the river or in the lake, and larger salmon than they had ever seen before. The country

thereabouts seemed to be possessed of such good qualities that cattle would need no fodder there during the winters. There was no frost there in the winters, and the grass withered but little. The days and nights there were of more nearly equal length than in Greenland or Iceland. On the shortest day of winter the sun was up between "eyktarstad" and "dagmala-stad."¹ When they had completed their house Leif said to his companions, "I propose now to divide our company into two groups, and to set about an exploration of the country; one half of our party shall remain at home at the house, while the other half shall investigate the land, and they must not go beyond a point from which they can return home the same evening, and are not to separate [from each other.]" Thus they did for a time; Leif himself, by turns, joined the exploring party or remained behind at the house. Leif was a large and powerful man, and of a most imposing bearing, a man of sagacity, and a very just man in all things.

Leif the Lucky finds Men upon a Skerry at Sea. — It was discovered one evening that one of their company was missing, and this proved to be Tyrker, the German. Leif was sorely troubled by this, for Tyrker had lived with Leif and his father for a long time, and had been very devoted to Leif, when he was a child. Leif severely reprimanded his companions, and prepared to go in search of him, taking twelve men with him. They had proceeded but a short distance from the house, when they were met by Tyrker, whom they received most cordially. Leif observed at once that his foster-father was in lively spirits. Tyrker had a prominent forehead, restless eyes, small features,

¹ These two words designate positions of the sun at two points of time. Early commentators got much more definite results from this observation than later ones, with scientific assistance, have succeeded in getting. Largely on the basis of it, Rafn (in *Antiquitates Americanae*), concluded that Vinland was in Rhode Island. Both Storm and Reeves, after detailed investigation, declare that it cannot be shown from this passage how far to the south Vinland was located. Captain Phythian, U.S.N., who has given the question careful consideration, says: "The data furnished are not sufficiently definite to warrant a more positive assertion than that the explorers could not have been, when the record was made, farther north than Lat. [say] 49°." See Reeves, p. 181, (66).

was diminutive in stature, and rather a sorry-looking individual withal, but was, nevertheless, a most capable handicraftsman. Leif addressed him, and asked: "Wherefore art thou so belated, foster-father mine, and astray from the others?" In the beginning Tyrker spoke for some time in German, rolling his eyes, and grinning, and they could not understand him; but after a time he addressed them in the Northern tongue: "I did not go much further [*than you*], and yet I have something of novelty to relate. I have found vines and grapes." "Is this indeed true, foster-father?" said Leif. "Of a certainty it is true," quoth he, "for I was born where there is no lack of either grapes or vines." They slept the night through, and on the morrow Leif said to his shipmates: "We will now divide our labors, and each day will either gather grapes or cut vines and fell trees, so as to obtain a cargo of these for my ship." They acted upon this advice, and it is said, that their after-boat was filled with grapes. A cargo sufficient for the ship was cut, and when the spring came, they made their ship ready, and sailed away; and from its products Leif gave the land a name, and called it Wineland. They sailed out to sea, and had fair winds until they sighted Greenland, and the fells below the glaciers; then one of the men spoke up, and said, "Why do you steer the ship so much into the wind?" Leif answers: "I have my mind upon my steering, but on other matters as well. Do ye not see anything out of the common?" They replied, that they saw nothing strange. "I do not know," says Leif, "whether it is a ship or a skerry that I see." Now they saw it, and said, that it must be a skerry; but he was so much keener of sight than they, that he was able to discern men upon the skerry. "I think it best to tack," says Leif, "so that we may draw near to them, that we may be able to render them assistance, if they should stand in need of it; and if they should not be peaceably disposed, we shall still have better command of the situation than they." They approached the skerry, and lowering their sail, cast anchor, and launched a second small boat, which they had brought with them. Tyrker inquired who was the leader of the party.

He replied that his name was Thori, and that he was a Norseman; "but what is thy name?" Leif gave his name. "Art thou a son of Eric the Red of Brattahlid?" says he. Leif responded that he was. "It is now my wish," says Leif, "to take you all into my ship, and likewise so much of your possessions as the ship will hold." This offer was accepted, and [with their ship] thus laden, they held away to Ericsfirth, and sailed until they arrived at Brattahlid. Having discharged the cargo, Leif invited Thori, with his wife, Gudrid, and three others, to make their home with him, and procured quarters for the other members of the crew, both for his own and Thori's men. Leif rescued fifteen persons from the skerry. He was afterward called Leif the Lucky. Leif had now goodly store both of property and honor. There was serious illness that winter in Thori's party, and Thori and a great number of his people died. Eric the Red also died that winter. There was now much talk about Leif's Wineland journey, and his brother, Thorvald, held that the country had not been sufficiently explored. Thereupon Leif said to Thorvald: "If it be thy will, brother, thou mayest go to Wineland with my ship, but I wish the ship first to fetch the wood, which Thori had upon the skerry." And so it was done.

Thorvald goes to Wineland. — Now Thorvald, with the advice of his brother, Leif, prepared to make this voyage with thirty men. They put their ship in order, and sailed out to sea; and there is no account of their voyage before their arrival at Leif's-booths in Wineland. They laid up their ship there, and remained there quietly during the winter, supplying themselves with food by fishing. In the spring, however, Thorvald said that they should put their ship in order, and that a few men should take the after-boat, and proceed along the western coast, and explore [the region] thereabouts during the summer. They found it a fair, well-wooded country; it was but a short distance from the woods to the sea, and [there were] white sands, as well as great numbers of islands and shallows. They found neither dwelling of man nor lair of beast; but in one of the westerly islands, they found a wooden building for

the shelter of grain. They found no other trace of human handiwork, and they turned back, and arrived at Leif's-booths in the autumn. The following summer Thorvald set out toward the east with the ship, and along the northern coast. They were met by a high wind off a certain promontory, and were driven ashore there, and damaged the keel of their ship, and were compelled to remain there for a long time and repair the injury to their vessel. Then said Thorvald to his companions: "I propose that we raise the keel upon this cape, and call it Keelness," and so they did. Then they sailed away, to the eastward off the land, and into the mouth of the adjoining firth, and to a headland, which projected into the sea there, and which was entirely covered with woods. They found an anchorage for their ship, and put out the gangway to the land, and Thorvald and all of his companions went ashore. "It is a fair region here," said he, "and here I should like to make my home." They then returned to the ship, and discovered on the sands, in beyond the headland, three mounds; they went up to these, and saw that they were three skin-canoes, with three men under each. They thereupon divided their party, and succeeded in seizing all of the men but one, who escaped with his canoe. They killed the eight men, and then ascended the headland again, and looked about them, and discovered within the firth certain hillocks, which they concluded must be habitations. They were then so overpowered with sleep that they could not keep awake, and all fell into a [heavy] slumber, from which they were awakened by the sound of a cry uttered above them; and the words of the cry were these: "Awake, Thorvald, thou and all thy company, if thou wouldst save thy life; and board thy ship with all thy men, and sail with all speed from the land!" A countless number of skin-canoes then advanced toward them from the inner part of the firth, whereupon Thorvald exclaimed: "We must put out the war-boards, on both sides of the ship, and defend ourselves to the best of our ability, but offer little attack." This they did, and the Skrellings, after they had shot at them for a time, fled precipitately, each as best he could. Thorvald then in-

quired of his men, whether any of them had been wounded, and they informed him that no one of them had received a wound. "I have been wounded in my arm-pit," says he; "an arrow flew in between the gunwale and the shield, below my arm. Here is the shaft, and it will bring me to my end! I counsel you now to retrace your way with the utmost speed. But me ye shall convey to that headland which seemed to me to offer so pleasant a dwelling-place; thus it may be fulfilled, that the truth sprang to my lips, when I expressed the wish to abide there for a time. Ye shall bury me there, and place a cross at my head, and another at my feet, and call it Crossness for ever after." At that time Christianity had obtained in Greenland; Eric the Red died, however, before [the introduction of] Christianity.

Thorvald died, and when they had carried out his injunctions, they took their departure, and rejoined their companions, and they told each other of the experiences which had befallen them. They remained there during the winter, and gathered grapes and wood with which to freight the ship. In the following spring they returned to Greenland, and arrived with their ship in Ericsfirth, where they were able to recount great tidings to Leif.

Thorstein Ericsson dies in the Western Settlement. — In the meantime it had come to pass in Greenland, that Thorstein of Ericsfirth had married, and taken to wife Gudrid, Thorbiorn's daughter, [she] who had been the spouse of Thori Eastman,¹ as has been already related. Now Thorstein Ericsson, being minded to make the voyage to Wineland after the body of his brother, Thorvald, equipped the same ship, and selected a crew of twenty-five men of good size and strength, and taking with him his wife, Gudrid, when all was in readiness, they sailed out into the open ocean, and out of sight of land. They were driven hither and thither over the sea all that sum-

¹ Evidently an incorrect statement. *Landnama-bok*, the authority on genealogical matters, says: "His son was Thorbiorn, father of Gudrid who married Thorstein, son of Eric the Red, and afterwards Thorfinn Karlsefni." Thori Eastman (the Norwegian) is not mentioned in the *Landnama-bok*.

mer, and lost all reckoning, and at the end of the first week of winter they made the land at Lysufirth in Greenland, in the Western Settlement. Thorstein set out in search of quarters for his crew, and succeeded in procuring homes for all of his shipmates; but he and his wife were unprovided for, and remained together upon the ship for two or more days. At this time Christianity was still in its infancy in Greenland. It befell, early one morning, that men came to their tent, and the leader inquired who the people were within the tent. Thorstein replies: "We are twain," says he; "but who is it who asks?" "My name is Thorstein, and I am known as Thorstein the Swarthy, and my errand hither is to offer you two, husband and wife, a home with me." Thorstein replied, that he would consult with his wife, and she bidding him decide, he accepted the invitation. "I will come after you on the morrow with a sumpter-horse, for I am not lacking in means wherewith to provide for you both, although it will be lonely living with me, since there are but two of us, my wife and myself, for I, forsooth, am a very hard man to get on with; moreover, my faith is not the same as yours, albeit methinks that is the better to which you hold." He returned for them on the morrow, with the beast, and they took up their home with Thorstein the Swarthy, and were well treated by him. Gudrid was a woman of fine presence, and a clever woman, and very happy in adapting herself to strangers.

Early in the winter Thorstein Ericsson's party was visited by sickness, and many of his companions died. He caused coffins to be made for the bodies of the dead, and had them conveyed to the ship, and bestowed there; "for it is my purpose to have all the bodies taken to Ericsfirth in the summer." It was not long before illness appeared in Thorstein's home, and his wife, whose name was Grimhild, was first taken sick. She was a very vigorous woman, and as strong as a man, but the sickness mastered her; and soon thereafter Thorstein Ericsson was seized with the illness, and they both lay ill at the same time, and Grimhild, Thorstein the Swarthy's wife, died, and when she was dead Thorstein went out of the room

to procure a deal, upon which to lay the corpse. Thereupon Gudrid spoke. "Do not be absent long, Thorstein mine!" says she. He replied, that so it should be. Thorstein Ericsson then exclaimed: "Our house-wife is acting now in a marvelous fashion, for she is raising herself up on her elbow, and stretching out her feet from the side of the bed, and groping after her shoes." At that moment Thorstein, the master of the house, entered, and Grimhild laid herself down, wherewithal every timber in the room creaked. Thorstein now fashioned a coffin for Grimhild's body, and bore it away, and cared for it. He was a big man, and strong, but it called for all [his strength], to enable him to remove the corpse from the house. The illness grew upon Thorstein Ericsson, and he died, whereat his wife, Gudrid, was sorely grieved. They were all in the room at the time, and Gudrid was seated upon a chair before the bench, upon which her husband, Thorstein, was lying. Thorstein, the master of the house, then taking Gudrid in his arms [carried her] from the chair, and seated himself, with her, upon another bench, over against her husband's body, and exerted himself in divers ways to console her, and endeavored to reassure her, and promised her that he would accompany her to Ericsfirth with the body of her husband, Thorstein, and those of his companions: "I will likewise summon other persons hither," says he, "to attend upon thee, and entertain thee." She thanked him. Then Thorstein Ericsson sat up, and exclaimed: "Where is Gudrid?" Thrice he repeated the question, but Gudrid made no response. She then asked Thorstein, the master, "Shall I give answer to his question, or not?" Thorstein, the master, bade her make no reply, and he then crossed the floor, and seated himself upon the chair, with Gudrid in his lap, and spoke, saying: "What dost thou wish, namesake?" After a little while, Thorstein replies: "I desire to tell Gudrid of the fate which is in store for her, to the end that she may be better reconciled to my death, for I am indeed come to a goodly resting-place. This I have to tell thee, Gudrid, that thou art to marry an Icelander, and that ye are to have a long wedded life together,

and a numerous and noble progeny, illustrious, and famous, of good odor and sweet virtues. Ye shall go from Greenland to Norway, and thence to Iceland, where ye shall build your home. There ye shall dwell together for a long time, but thou shalt outlive him, and shalt then go abroad and to the South, and shalt return to Iceland again, to thy home, and there a church shall then be raised, and thou shalt abide there and take the veil, and there thou shalt die." When he had thus spoken, Thorstein sank back again, and his body was laid out for burial, and borne to the ship. Thorstein, the master, faithfully performed all his promises to Gudrid. He sold his lands and livestock in the spring, and accompanied Gudrid to the ship, with all his possessions. He put the ship in order, procured a crew, and then sailed to Ericsfirth. The bodies of the dead were now buried at the church, and Gudrid then went home to Leif at Brattahlid, while Thorstein the Swarthy made a home for himself on Ericsfirth, and remained there as long as he lived, and was looked upon as a very superior man.

Of the Wineland Voyages of Thorfinn and his Companions. — That same summer a ship came from Norway to Greenland. The skipper's name was Thorfinn Karlsefni; he was a son of Thord Horsehead, and a grandson of Snorri, the son of Thord of Höfdi. Thorfinn Karlsefni, who was a very wealthy man, passed the winter at Brattahlid with Leif Ericsson. He very soon set his heart upon Gudrid, and sought her hand in marriage; she referred him to Leif for her answer, and was subsequently betrothed to him, and their marriage was celebrated that same winter. A renewed discussion arose concerning a Wineland voyage, and the folk urged Karlsefni to make the venture, Gudrid joining with the others. He determined to undertake the voyage, and assembled a company of sixty men and five women, and entered into an agreement with his shipmates that they should each share equally in all the spoils of the enterprise. They took with them all kinds of cattle, as it was their intention to settle the country, if they could. Karlsefni asked Leif for the house in Wineland, and he replied, that he would lend it but not give it. They sailed out to sea

with the ship, and arrived safe and sound at Leif's-booths, and carried their hammocks ashore there. They were soon provided with an abundant and goodly supply of food, for a whale of good size and quality was driven ashore there, and they secured it, and flensed it, and had then no lack of provisions. The cattle were turned out upon the land, and the males soon became very restless and vicious; they had brought a bull with them. Karlsefni caused trees to be felled, and to be hewed into timbers, wherewith to load his ship, and the wood was placed upon a cliff to dry. They gathered somewhat of all of the valuable products of the land, grapes, and all kinds of game and fish, and other good things. In the summer succeeding the first winter, Skrellings were discovered. A great troop of men came forth from out the woods. The cattle were hard by, and the bull began to bellow and roar with a great noise, whereat the Skrellings were frightened, and ran away, with their packs wherein were gray furs, sables, and all kinds of peltries. They fled towards Karlsefni's dwelling, and sought to effect an entrance into the house, but Karlsefni caused the doors to be defended [against them]. Neither [people] could understand the other's language. The Skrellings put down their bundles then, and loosed them, and offered their wares [for barter], and were especially anxious to exchange these for weapons, but Karlsefni forbade his men to sell their weapons, and taking counsel with himself, he bade the women carry out milk to the Skrellings, which they no sooner saw, than they wanted to buy it, and nothing else. Now the outcome of the Skrellings' trading was, that they carried their wares away in their stomachs, while they left their packs and peltries behind with Karlsefni and his companions, and having accomplished this [exchange] they went away. Now it is to be told, that Karlsefni caused a strong wooden palisade to be constructed and set up around the house. It was at this time that Gudrid, Karlsefni's wife, gave birth to a male child, and the boy was called Snorri. In the early part of the second winter the Skrellings came to them again, and these were now much more numerous than before, and brought

with them the same wares as at first. Then said Karlsefni to the women: "Do ye carry out now the same food, which proved so profitable before, and nought else." When they saw this they cast their packs in over the palisade. Gudrid was sitting within, in the doorway, beside the cradle of her infant son, Snorri, when a shadow fell upon the door, and a woman in a black namkirtle entered. She was short in stature, and wore a fillet about her head; her hair was of a light chestnut color, and she was pale of hue, and so big-eyed, that never before had eyes so large been seen in a human skull. She went up to where Gudrid was seated, and said: "What is thy name?" "My name is Gudrid; but what is thy name?" "My name is Gudrid," says she. The housewife, Gudrid, motioned her with her hand to a seat beside her; but it so happened, that at that very instant Gudrid heard a great crash, whereupon the woman vanished, and at that same moment one of the Skrellings, who had tried to seize their weapons, was killed by one of Karlsefni's followers. At this the Skrellings fled precipitately, leaving their garments and wares behind them; and not a soul, save Gudrid alone, beheld this woman. "Now we must needs take counsel together," says Karlsefni, "for that I believe they will visit us a third time, in great numbers, and attack us. Let us now adopt this plan: ten of our number shall go out upon the cape, and show themselves there, while the remainder of our company shall go into the woods and hew a clearing for our cattle, when the troop approaches from the forest. We will also take our bull, and let him go in advance of us." The lie of the land was such that the proposed meeting-place had the lake upon the one side, and the forest upon the other. Karlsefni's advice was now carried into execution. The Skrellings advanced to the spot which Karlsefni had selected for the encounter, and a battle was fought there, in which great numbers of the band of the Skrellings were slain. There was one man among the Skrellings, of large size and fine bearing, whom Karlsefni concluded must be their chief. One of the Skrellings picked up an axe, and having looked at it for a time, he brandished it about one

of his companions, and hewed at him, and on the instant the man fell dead. Thereupon the big man seized the axe, and after examining it for a moment, he hurled it as far as he could, out into the sea; then they fled helter-skelter into the woods, and thus their intercourse came to an end. Karlsefni and his party remained there throughout the winter, but in the spring Karlsefni announces, that he is not minded to remain there longer, but will return to Greenland. They now made ready for the voyage, and carried away with them much booty in vines and grapes, and peltries. They sailed out upon the high seas, and brought their ship safely to Ericsfirth, where they remained during the winter.

Freydis causes the Brothers to be put to Death. — There was now much talk anew, about a Wineland-voyage, for this was reckoned both a profitable and an honorable enterprise. The same summer that Karlsefni arrived from Wineland, a ship from Norway arrived in Greenland. This ship was commanded by two brothers, Helgi and Finnbogi, who passed the winter in Greenland. They were descended from an Icelandic family of the East-firths. It is now to be added, that Freydis,¹ Eric's daughter, set out from her home at Gardar, and waited upon the brothers, Helgi and Finnbogi, and invited them to sail with their vessel to Wineland, and to share with her equally all of the good things which they might succeed in obtaining there. To this they agreed, and she departed thence to visit her brother, Leif, and ask him to give her the house which he had caused to be erected in Wineland, but he made her the same answer [as that which he had given Karlsefni], saying, that he would lend the house, but not give it. It was stipulated between Karlsefni and Freydis, that each should have on ship-board thirty able-bodied men, besides the women; but Freydis immediately violated this compact, by concealing five men more [than this number], and this the brothers did not discover before they arrived in Wineland. They now put out to sea, having agreed beforehand, that they would sail in company,

¹ This cruel virago plays a much less conspicuous part in the version of Hauk's Book and AM. 557.

if possible, and although they were not far apart from each other, the brothers arrived somewhat in advance, and carried their belongings up to Leif's house. Now when Freydis arrived, her ship was discharged, and the baggage carried up to the house, whereupon Freydis exclaimed: "Why did you carry your baggage in here?" "Since we believed," said they, "that all promises made to us would be kept." "It was to me that Leif loaned the house," says she, "and not to you." Whereupon Helgi exclaimed: "We brothers cannot hope to rival thee in wrong-dealing." They thereupon carried their baggage forth, and built a hut, above the sea, on the bank of the lake, and put all in order about it; while Freydis caused wood to be felled, with which to load her ship. The winter now set in, and the brothers suggested, that they should amuse themselves by playing games. This they did for a time, until the folk began to disagree, when dissensions arose between them, and the games came to an end, and the visits between the houses ceased; and thus it continued far into the winter. One morning early, Freydis arose from her bed, and dressed herself, but did not put on her shoes and stockings. A heavy dew had fallen, and she took her husband's cloak, and wrapped it about her, and then walked to the brothers' house, and up to the door, which had been only partly closed by one of the men, who had gone out a short time before. She pushed the door open, and stood, silently, in the doorway for a time. Finnbogi, who was lying on the innermost side of the room, was awake, and said: "What dost thou wish here, Freydis?" She answers: "I wish thee to rise, and go out with me, for I would speak with thee." He did so, and they walked to a tree, which lay close by the wall of the house, and seated themselves upon it. "How art thou pleased here?" says she. He answers: "I am well pleased with the fruitfulness of the land, but I am ill-content with the breach which has come between us, for, methinks, there has been no cause for it." "It is even as thou sayest," says she, "and so it seems to me; but my errand to thee is, that I wish to exchange ships with you brothers, for that ye have a larger ship than I, and I wish

to depart from here." "To this I must accede," says he, "if it is thy pleasure." Therewith they parted, and she returned home, and Finnbogi to his bed. She climbed up into bed, and awakened Thorvard with her cold feet, and he asked her why she was so cold and wet. She answered, with great passion: "I have been to the brothers," says she, "to try to buy their ship, for I wished to have a larger vessel, but they received my overtures so ill, that they struck me, and handled me very roughly; what time thou, poor wretch, wilt neither avenge my shame nor thy own, and I find, perforce, that I am no longer in Greenland, moreover I shall part from thee unless thou wraakest vengeance for this." And now he could stand her taunts no longer, and ordered the men to rise at once, and take their weapons, and this they did, and they then proceeded directly to the house of the brothers, and entered it, while the folk were asleep, and seized and bound them, and led each one out, when he was bound; and as they came out, Freydis caused each one to be slain. In this wise all of the men were put to death, and only the women were left, and these no one would kill. At this Freydis exclaimed: "Hand me an axe!" This was done, and she fell upon the five women, and left them dead. They returned home, after this dreadful deed, and it was very evident that Freydis was well content with her work. She addressed her companions, saying: "If it be ordained for us, to come again to Greenland, I shall contrive the death of any man who shall speak of these events. We must give it out, that we left them living here, when we came away." Early in the spring, they equipped the ship, which had belonged to the brothers, and freighted it with all of the products of the land, which they could obtain, and which the ship would carry. Then they put out to sea, and, after a prosperous voyage, arrived with their ship in Ericsfirth early in the summer. Karlsefni was there, with his ship all ready to sail, and was awaiting a fair wind; and people say, that a ship richer laden, than that which he commanded, never left Greenland.

Concerning Freydis. — Freydis now went to her home,

since it had remained unharmed during her absence. She bestowed liberal gifts upon all of her companions, for she was anxious to screen her guilt. She now established herself at her home; but her companions were not all so close-mouthed, concerning their misdeeds and wickedness, that rumors did not get abroad at last. These finally reached her brother, Leif, and he thought it a most shameful story. He thereupon took three of the men, who had been of Freydis's party, and forced them all at the same time to a confession of the affair, and their stories entirely agreed. "I have no heart," says Leif, "to punish my sister, Freydis, as she deserves, but this I predict of them, that there is little prosperity in store for their offspring." Hence it came to pass, that no one from that time forward thought them worthy of aught but evil. It now remains to take up the story from the time when Karlsefni made his ship ready, and sailed out to sea. He had a successful voyage, and arrived in Norway safe and sound. He remained there during the winter, and sold his wares, and both he and his wife were received with great favor by the most distinguished men of Norway. The following spring he put his ship in order for the voyage to Iceland; and when all his preparations had been made, and his ship lying at the wharf, awaiting favorable winds, there came to him a Southerner, a native of Bremen in the Saxonland, who wished to buy his "house-neat."¹ "I do not wish to sell it," said he. "I will give thee half a 'mörk' in gold for it," says the Southerner. This Karlsefni thought a good offer, and accordingly closed the bargain. The Southerner went his way, with the "house-neat," and Karlsefni knew not what wood it was, but it was "mösur," come from Wineland.

Karlsefni sailed away, and arrived with his ship in the north of Iceland, in Skagafirth. His vessel was beached there during the winter, and in the spring he bought Glaumbœiar-land, and made his home there, and dwelt there as long as he lived, and was a man of the greatest prominence. From him and

¹ "A weather-vane, or other ornament at the point of the gable of a house or upon a ship." (Fritzner.)

his wife, Gudrid, a numerous and goodly lineage is descended. After Karlsefni's death, Gudrid, together with her son, Snorri, who was born in Wineland, took charge of the farmstead; and when Snorri was married, Gudrid went abroad, and made a pilgrimage to the South, after which she returned again to the home of her son, Snorri, who had caused a church to be built at Glaumbær. Gudrid then took the veil and became an anchorite, and lived there the rest of her days. Snorri had a son, named Thorgeir, who was the father of Ingveld, the mother of Bishop Brand. Hallfrid was the name of the daughter of Snorri, Karlsefni's son; she was the mother of Runolf, Bishop Thorlak's father. Biorn was the name of [another] son of Karlsefni and Gudrid; he was the father of Thorunn, the mother of Bishop Biorn. Many men are descended from Karlsefni, and he has been blessed with a numerous and famous posterity; and of all men Karlsefni has given the most exact accounts of all these voyages, of which something has now been recounted.