

Old-lore Miscellany
OF
Orkney Shetland Caithness
and **Sutherland**

VOL. VII.

OLD-LORE SERIES

VOL. VIII.

OLD-LORE MISCELLANY
OF
ORKNEY SHETLAND CAITHNESS
AND
SUTHERLAND

EDITED BY
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DE GRIND O' DE NAVER: NAFARS-GRIND, ESHANESS, NORTHMAVINE.

From the original water-colour drawing by T. M. Richardson, in Dr. Edward Charlton's "Visit to Shetland," 1832.

Old-lore Miscellany

OF

ORKNEY, SHETLAND, CAITHNESS AND SUTHERLAND.

VOL. VII.

PART I.

JAN., 1914.

NOTES.

NORSE PLACE-NAMES IN SCOTLAND.—The *Scottish Geographical Magazine* mentions that a small Committee has again been formed to advise the Ordnance Survey Department as to the spelling of place-names—(1) presented on the map in Gaelic spelling, (2) of Celtic origin, but presented on the map in Anglicised form. Of this Committee Dr. W. J. Watson is Chairman, and Mr. John Mathieson, F.R.S.G.S., Hon. Secretary. The fourth head of their inquiry is (4) “With regard to the very large number of names of Norse origin occurring in or near Gaelic-speaking districts, the Committee, recognizing the importance for philological purposes of the forms these names have assumed in Gaelic, desires to obtain information here also as to the actual Gaelic pronunciation.” The Committee asks for the gift or loan of papers, etc., embodying the result of investigations already made. The Committee report to the Ordnance Survey Department, but publish their decisions and authenticated information in the *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, and communications should be addressed to The Royal Scottish Geographical Society, Synod Hall, Castle Terrace, Edinburgh.—J. G.

DEER HUNTING IN SUTHERLAND IN THE OLDEN TIME.—In the November number of the *Celtic Review*, Dr. W. J. Watson has an interesting and important article, entitled “Aoibhinn an Obair an t-Sealg,” in which he makes reference to the old method of deer-hunting

in the Highlands by driving them into *Elricks*, or enclosures, which were open on one side. The following reference will interest Sutherland readers:—"The Elricks are found from the Moray Firth to the Solway, especially in Aberdeenshire and Perthshire. There is none known to me north of Inverness. We should have expected to find Elricks in Monar, the scene of the great huntings of the Lords of Lovat, in Freevater, where the Earls of Ross, and later the Lairds of Balnagowan were wont to hunt, and in Sutherland. None, however, appear on record, and the old tradition has largely gone with the people who once knew the ground in connexion with their sheilings and grazings. North of Inverness, but not confined to that region, we find another term, namely, *eileag*. Travellers between Lairg and Lochinver know *Mòinteach Eileag*, 'the moss of eileags.' This term also was long puzzling. The solution came when I was told the tale of *Eileag Bad Challaidh*, a place near Amat, Strathcarron, somewhere about Sallachy. Very few now seem to know the exact spot, and though I know the locality fairly well, I have not seen it. The tale goes that in the old times the people of Strathcarron were often hard pressed by the Lochlannaich, which, in view of the place-names Dibidale, Amat, and Alladale at the head of the strath, and Gruinzeord at its foot, is no doubt correct. At such times two places were of great importance, *Cairidh Cinn-Chàrdain*, 'the weir of Kin-cardine,' near the parish church, for the catching of salmon, and *Eileag Bad Challaidh*, in the heights, for deer. The *eileag*, according to my informant, was an arrangement, very like that described in the *Old Stat. Acc.* as once prevalent in Rum, for catching deer. There are about half a dozen names in Ross known to me involving *eileag*, and about the same number in Sutherland. The term is based on Old Gael. *ail*, stone, whence *aileach*, a mill lade, Craigellachie, na h-Eilea-

chan Naomha, etc., and the true *eileag* would be of stone, as described in Rum. The stone structure would be resorted to where wood was scarce, or for permanency.”—(*Celtic Review*, IX., 165).

OLD WALLS IN SUTHERLAND.—In the above article Dr. Watson makes reference to walls found in Sutherland running across moor and glen, as follows:—“ In Sutherland there are the remains of a number of old walls constructed of stones and earth running across moor, mountain, and glen in a very remarkable way. One of these, which I have seen, begins at Ben Vraggie, runs up part of Dunrobin glen, then strikes across the hill on the north side of the glen, and then comes out at Altnaharra. Another is said to connect Loch Brora and Loch Shin. The length of one is said to be nearly thirty miles. In Ross similar walls occur. One runs between Loch Maree and Loch Torridon, another runs right through Coigach. Another runs east and west on the high ground between Loch Broom and Little Loch Broom; a burn which crosses it is called Altnaharrie, and the wall runs up to a hill called *Maoil na h-Eirbhe*. I have explained *Eirbhe* elsewhere to be the old word for a fence or wall. The purpose of these walls has never been considered, and indeed antiquaries seem to be unaware of their existence, but when they do come to be mapped out and studied, a connexion with the great deer-hunts is one of the possibilities that might be considered.”—(*Celtic Review*, IX., 166).

“ RAADMEN ” OF ORKNEY AND SHETLAND.—Modern glossaries have references to the *raadmen*, *raddmen*, councillors, of Orkney and Shetland, a designation which does not occur in any local records. This fiction appears to have arisen in the following manner.

1750: in Mackenzie's *Grievances* (reprint, 1836, Appendix, p. ii., is printed a charter of agreement, of 1485, regarding land in Shetland, narrating a private

transaction which had taken place in Bergen, before the lawman of Gulathing and Bergen, the lawman of Shetland, five radmen "in the same place" [*i.e.*, Bergen], and a lawrightman of Shetland. This document is described by Mackenzie as "Decree by **the lawman of Bergen** in Norway, and also by **the lawman of Shetland and their council**, reversing a sale of land in these islands, as made contrary to law." (See also *Orkney and Shetland Records*, I., 54). The *radmen*, councillors, of Bergen are, here, erroneously called the council of the lawmen of Bergen and *Shetland*. On this mistaken assumption he stated (p. 12) that: "As the high-foud [whom he equated with the *lawman* of Shetland, p. 10] was assisted by a council, thence called raadmen, *i.e.*, councillors or assessors; so the sub-fouds, in imitation of him, had a council also called lagrætmen, *i.e.*, legal-men, or (as we now English it) law-right-men; a sort of subalterns."

A doom of the lawthing of Orkney, in 1514, (*O. and S. Records*, I., 253; Mackenzie's *Grievances*, Appendix, p. iv.), was dempt by the lawman of Shetland and Orkney "for the time," and certain of famous, discreet and unsuspect persons of roith men and roith men's sons, chosen, the great oath sworn, and admitted to decide in a matter of heritage. These persons Mackenzie described (p. 11) as "the lawman of Orkney and Shetland, and the rætmen his assistants"; the latter term being treated as equivalent to the above-mentioned *raadmen*, and to the latter part of the term (lag)rætmen. *Raadmen* and *roith men* are = O.N. *ráðsmenn* (from German *rathmann*), and *ráð menn*, whereas *lagrætmen* = O.N. *lögréttumenn*, members of the *lögrétta*, or assize, of the *lögþing*, lawthing. Mackenzie stated (p. 105) that *rothmen* or *roythmen* = *óðalsmenn*, whose *óðul* were transmitted with the *roth* or *royth*, etc.; and a foot reference is given to the above doom in his appendix. If this reference was given by

Mackenzie, it would appear to show that he only equated the *assize*, and not the term *roythmen*, with *rætmen*. If, on the other hand, the reference is by the editor of the reprint, then it is possible that Mackenzie founded his statement on a definition similar to that given in 1551 (see below).

1805: Barry's *Orkney* (2nd ed., 1808, p. 225), evidently on the authority of Mackenzie's *Grievances*, states: "As the chief judge had a council consisting of several members called *raddmen* or counsellors, so the inferior ones had their council also, composed of members denominated *lagrætmen* or *law-wrightmen* [!], who were a kind of constables for the execution of justice in their respective islands."

Jamieson's *Dictionary*: Barry is quoted as the authority for the "*raddmen*" of Orkney, etc.

1822: Hibbert's *Shetland*, evidently on the authority of Mackenzie, whose work is frequently referred to, states (p. 275); "The prefect or lagman of Shetland . . . was assisted by counsellors, who had the name of *raadmen* given to them, from the Scandinavian word *raett* [!] signifying right." Hibbert thought: "There is reason to suppose" that Faroe, Shetland, Orkney and the Hebrides were each, "like Iceland, divided into four quarters or *fiordungar*" (p. 270). Did he know of the division of Orkney into north and south isles, and east and west Mainland?

1866: Edmondston's *Glossary* [quoting Barry, *per* Jamieson]: "Raddman, a councillor, a term formerly used in Orkney."

1874: Cleasby's *Icelandic Dictionary*, s.v. *ráð*: "*ráðsmaðr*, a manager, a counsellor, . . . a steward, . . . a town-counsellor [cp. Dan. *raadmand*, Orkn. *raddman*]." [Quoting Jamieson?]

1898, Feb. 19: *Shetland News*: "An assize of raadmen," in Shetland trials. (E.D.D., s.v., *rad*).

1904: E.D.D., s.v., *rad*, Shetland and Orkney;

“Hence raddman, sb., a councillor.” [Quoting Edmondston?].

The foregoing chronological genealogy of a fiction will now be followed by a similar arrangement of facts. The page references below are to *Orkney and Shetland Records*, I. *Lawrightman*, *roithman* and *roith* have been arranged together for the sake of comparison.

1307: lögréttumenn (lawrightmen), members of a Shetland court (lögrétta of the lögþing), p. xxx.

1446: larikmen (lawrightmen) and lawman of Orkney append their seals to a diploma. (Dean Gule's translation, in 1554, of the Latin, either of the original or of a more complete copy than that from which another, and Latin, copy was made. See Barry's *Orkney*, 1808, pp. 401-419).

1485: lawrightman, Shetland, mentioned, p. 54.

1509: [members of an “ogang,” a district court] the worthiest and best of the land gathered, landed men roythmen (including two persons of the same name described as “younger” and “elder”); the doom was given by the lawman and the “foresaid persons,” while the lawman, at the instance of the said individual “roythmen,” [who had not got their individual seals with them] appended his seal on their behalf, p. 251.

1509: the lawthing, the lawman of Orkney and Shetland, for the time, and the worthiest in Orkney; doom dempt by the lawman and the [x]xiii. of the worthiest (p. 60).

1510: Shetland court, the lawman and the “foresaid persons” give doom (p. 61).

1514: doom dempt by the lawman of Orkney “for the time,” and certain of famous, discreet and unsuspect persons of roith men and roith men's sons chosen, admitted to decide in a matter of heritage in the (assize of the) lawthing of Orkney, in which the doom was given by the “foresaid doomsmen,” p. 254.

1516: doom dempt before the justice of Orkney "for the time," by (20) worthy persons (some of whom were "younger"), who, as "doomsmen," gave their doom. The docket bears: "doom of best landedmen and roythmen in Orkney [present] at that time," p. xxxiv.

N.B.—The term used for officials who held a continuous office during the pleasure of another is "for the time," while the term used for others who only acted in any temporary capacity, such as attendance at a court, is "present at that time."

1519: doom dempt by the justice "for the time," the lawman of Shetland and Orkney "for the present," and with them 24 of the worthiest and best landedmen roathmen, in a district court; the doom was given by the lawman with the advice of the judge and the "24 persons," p. 62.

1523: roicht of land in Orkney, mentioned, p. 103.

1534: rocht . . . won and to be won, such as land, etc., in Orkney, p. 64.

1536: royt of land in Shetland. Goudie's *Shetland*, p. 139.

1538: lawrightmen and others in a district court, Shetland, p. 70.

1544: *roith*, described as the privilege of redeeming alienated óðal, in Orkney. Gt. Seal Reg. Scot., and p. xxxiii.

1551: *roithman* described as the person who had the right to redeem alienated óðal in Orkney; in the appurtenances of the land in question is enumerated: roitht owthell thereof, p. 259.

1558: "assize" of sheriff court in Orkney, p. 264.

1576: "assize" of the lawthing of Shetland, including persons having land, heritage, and great leases from the king, and the servants of the foud. Opp. O.Z., 44, 58, and p. xxxii.

1576: the "lawrightman" of Shetland described as

the chancellor of the parochial court. Opp. O.Z., 18, 27, and p. xxxvi.

1576: "larikman" in a baillie court, Orkney, p. 271. This Orkney form of *lögréttumaðr* may have arisen from some association with the word *rök*, *rek*, witness, evidence. In N.G.L., *rækr* occurs in error for *rættr*, i.e., *réttr*, right.

From the foregoing notes it will be seen that the members of the *lögrétta* (assize) of the *lögþing* (lawthing) of Shetland were called *lögréttumenn* (lawrightmen) in 1307; and the "larikmen" of Orkney, in 1446, were, probably, also members of the similar court there, and as such testified to evidence regarding the genealogy of the earls. After the transference of the islands to Scotland in 1468-9, we find the assize of the lawthing and district courts, roithmen and roith described as follows:

Qualification and Designation.	Collective Designation.	Place.
1509: landed men roythmen	said persons ¹	Orkney
[1509]: worthiest	24 worthiest	Orkney
1510: lawrightmen and other good worthy men	foresaid persons	Shetland
1514: roith men and roith men's sons	doomsmen	Orkney
1516: worthy persons	doomsmen	Orkney
1519: landed men roathmen	24 persons	Orkney
1523-1544: roith, the right of redeeming alienated óðal	..	Orkney (and Shetland)
1538: lawrightmen and others, members of a district court	..	Shetland
1551: roithman, one who had the roith or privilege to redeem alienated óðal	..	Orkney

¹ This doom was sealed by the lawman on behalf of himself and the "said roythmen."

Qualification and Designation.	Collective Designation.	Place.
1558: assize of sheriff court	assize	Orkney
1576: assize of lawthing, persons having lands, heritage and great leases of the king	assize	Shetland
1576: lawrightman, chancellor of parochial court, learned in the law	..	Shetland
1576: larikman in baillie court	..	Orkney

If we allow these terms to explain themselves, we find that Balfour's : "Roithmen and roithmen's sons : odallers and odalborn" is correct. (Opp. O.Z., gloss. s.v., *rothe*, where it is mis-spelt *roithismen*).

The whole question is decisively settled by (1) "roith men and roith men's sons," the class from which members of the assize were chosen; (2) *roith*, the privilege of [alienating and] redeeming alienated óðal, and (3) *roithman*, the person who had the *roith* or privilege of [alienating and] redeeming alienated óðal, i.e., an óðalsmaðr and óðalborinn.

It must also be noted that in every instance above referred to, the qualification precedes and the designation follows the name of the individual :

noble and potent man . . . justice
. . . lawman
honourable man . . . sheriff (1558, p. 264)
worthiest and best of the
landed men roythmen
and roythmen's sons . . . gave their verdict as
'doomsmen' or 'said
persons.'

In every instance, without exception, the doom is *dempt* by the "doomsmen" or the "foresaid persons," and never by the "roythmen," although there would have been nothing singular if it had been dempt by

“the said landed men,” or “the said roythmen,” in the same way as it had been by the “foresaid persons.”

If the term *ráðsmaðr*, town councillor, had been used in Orkney, the form would have been, as in Bergen, “We, lawman of Orkney, and ráðsmenn (or more probably *raadmen*) in Orkney,” etc., without any reference to their óðal qualification as “landedmen roythmenn,” such being comprehended in the statutory term *ráðsmaðr*, town councillor.

The division of the office of lawrightman into two offices, and the retention of the designation by the permanent parochial official, left the *pro tempore* assize without any permanent official title (a title which they did not now require, considering their temporary status as a jury or doomsmen), which gave rise to a recital of their property qualification—landed men roith men and roith men’s sons.

In Orkney, therefore, *ráðmaðr* = *óðalsmaðr* and *óðalborinn*, and we find their *sons* in the assize described as “younger.” It was a grievance in Shetland in 1576, that absentees from the lawthing were excessively fined and their lawful sons repelled (Opp. O. Z., 58). The *óðalsmaðr* alienated and redeemed his alienated óðal, by his own *ráð*, *roith*, counsel; e.g., a Shetlander, in 1567, sold his óðal after his own deliberate *raad*, *ráð*, counsel (p. 82), and in this sense the word occurs frequently in O.N. literature and laws.

It seems probable that it was shortly after the transference of the islands to Scotland, in 1468-9, that the office of lawrightman was divided into two separate offices held by different persons, viz., (1) the permanent parochial *lawrightman*, who retained the name, and (2) the temporary *doomsman*, a member of the assize of the lawthing; which division of the office permitted of different sets of *óðalsmenn* being employed to try different cases, and so corresponding with the Scottish assize or jury.

O.N. *ráðsmaðr*, a town councillor, was borrowed from the German *rathmann*. It occurs in the Norse laws as follows: first in 1275, *raðsmenn*, *radzmenn*; 1280, *ráðsmenn*; 1295, *radsmenn*, *radhsmenn*; 1306, *raadmenn*; 1377, *radman*; 1425, *radman*, *ratman*; modern, *raadmand*. If roithman, for councillor, had been borrowed by Orkney from Norway, it must have taken place after the letter *s* was dropped, and before *d* lost its soft *th* sound, as otherwise the form would have been *raadman*. So far as evidence goes, the term *law-rightman* appears to have been used in Orkney and Shetland for a member of the assize of the lawthing until the 15th century. The Orkney *roithman*, or *roith man*, only makes his appearance in the sixteenth century, and the term was undoubtedly coined from *roith* (O.N. *ráð*), which in Orkney and Shetland came to mean the right of redeeming óðal; hence *roith man*, the man who had that right (and consequently an óðalsmaðr) as defined in the above quoted document of 1551.

After the advent of the Scottish sheriffs (in 1490, when the bishopric was erected into a Scottish regality, and) early in the sixteenth century in the earldom, the qualification of members of the assize of the lawthing was extended to include "all persons having land, heritage, and great taks or leases of the king" (p. xxxii.); upon which the roithmen, as members of the assize, disappeared, as the qualification to hold office in the assize was no longer restricted to their class.—
A. W. JOHNSTON.

QUERIES.

MAGNUS HORRIE.—In the "Caledonian Mercury" of Monday, 22nd September, 1766, the following appears: "By a letter from Algiers we are informed that one Magnus Horrie, a native of Shetland, and once one of the clerks of the exchequer here [*i.e.*, in Edinburgh],

who, about eighteen years ago, went abroad, is now residing at Algiers, and is so high in favour and confidence with the Dey of that place that he has made him one of his principal secretaries."

Is anything known of this Magnus Horrie? Any particulars would be interesting.—R. STUART BRUCE.

PATRONYMICS.—When did patronymics cease to be used by the Gaels in Caithness and Sutherland and generally throughout the Highlands, and the permanent use of mac-, nicknames and place-names become substituted?—GENEALOGIST.

REPLIES.

"SHENNAN'S ISLE" (vi., 9, 74)—In reply to the Editor, The Hydrographer writes that "the name 'Shennan's Isle' was altered on Admiralty Chart No. 2651, to 'Brough of Leraness' in the year 1906."

ORKNEY LULLABIES (Vol. VI., 118, 172).—
 Pussy sat in the kiln door spinnin', spinnin';
 By cam' a peerie moose rinnin,' rinnin',
 Sayin', "Whit's this thoo'r deuin,' me lady, me lady?"
 "Spinnin' coat an' breeks tae me eldest son:
 Fast, ye teef, I hae thee."

Ba-loo, lillie beetie,
 Mammie's at the cittie
 For tae plick an' for tae pu'
 For tae gather lammies' woo'
 For tae buy a bullie's skin
 Tae rock wir bonnie bairn in.

—JOHN FIRTH, Finstown, Orkney.

HJALTLAND (I. 57, III. 136, V. 14, 104, 153, VI. 10).—
 I would crave the indulgence of readers of *Old Lore* for one more, and, as far as I am concerned, final discussion of "ealthar" as a suggested derivation of "Shetland." Mr. Marshall's pronouncement with regard to the Celts we may leave as he has left it. In

admitting that the name "Celtae," though originally applied to a tribe in the south of France, was often used much more widely, he has practically admitted everything I argued for. One point only seems worth noting. In his excursion into Greek literature he asserts that there are *only two* (the italics are his own) notices of the "Keltoi" in Aristotle. I find at least three in the *Politics* of Aristotle alone. But the whole question is really one for the philologists to fight out with the anthropologists and archæologists. If he is satisfied that he has given the quietus to that explanation of the word "Hjaltar," we may let it rest at that.

His argument regarding "Hjaltar" and "ealthar," however, demands some notice, and his reply to my argument some criticism. Let us take the points *seriatim* according to his own system.

1. The statement that Shetland was nearest to Orkney or Scotland was neither made nor implied by me. He has, in fact, missed the whole point of my statement, which was, that Shetland was nearest to *Norway*, and may have been therefore the outlying portion towards Norway of a country inhabited by the "Hjaltar."

2 (a) Mr. Marshall seems to think the thirteenth century late for a written attestation in Norse that "Hjaltar" had a singular. The singular, as found in the *Sturlunga*, is contemporary, or practically so, with the plural, except for plurals in poetry, quoted in works like the *Orkneyinga*, edited as late as, or even later than this. (See Vigfusson's *Prolegomena to Sturlunga* for dates). It is suggested, moreover, that "Hjaltr nökkurr" is a doubtful reading, and that "Hjaltlendingr nökkurr" may be the true reading. So far as I know such a reading has never before been suggested, and I should like to have Mr. Marshall's authority for it. The only alternative reading is that given in the footnote in Vigfusson's *Sturlunga*, which

is "hjal. nokkurum." This alternative is impossible, because it does not make any sense in the context, but the suggestion that "hjal." = "Hjaltlendingr" does not seem to mend matters as far as the "nokkurum" is concerned, and in any case what evidence is there for it?

(b) There is again no evidence for the statement that "Hjaltr" is a synonym to "Hjaltlendingr." Even if it were it would still require to be explained. Obviously "Hjaltlendingr" is originally adjectival, as is "Hjaltlenzkr," the existence of which has been unintelligibly ignored. The one is equivalent to "Shetlandian," the other to "Shetlandish." But see again below.

(c) "Plurals often precede singulars." Quite so, but what does it prove in this case? See below.

3. (a) No sufficient reasons for the "h" are yet given. Unless we take the wide philosophical interpretation of relevancy, in which case anything is relevant to anything else in an ordered universe, the three words originally given by Mr. Marshall as analogies (*Ἀθήναι*, etc.) were not relevant. Here we have to explain a specific point in connexion with a specific word in a specific language, and general arguments from folk etymology and from the analogy of other languages are not relevant in proof, though they might possibly be in support, of such a case. That is to say, until we have, first of all, argument bearing on the specific point that the "h" is intrusive, all the rest of the argument is irrelevant. See (4) below.

(b) The "h" in "Morhaefi" and in "atthaefi" is not initial, despite the fact that it is initial in the second component of a compound.

4. The phonetic value of "h" in Hjaltland may be found by looking where one ought to look first, *i.e.*, in the word "Shetland" itself. The true Shetlander practically preserves the old word, and says "Hjät-

land," not "Shetland." "Hj" is, in fact, represented in the transcribed Shetland dialect by "Sh," but is not phonetically equivalent to "Sh." In the mouth of a Dane the word would of course be "Yetland"; but the old form "Hetland" (at least as old as Flatbk.) may indicate another explanation of this pronunciation and spelling.

5. "Hrossey" might be a good analogy for "Cattleland" and the accompanying argument valid, if "Cattleland" had been the name given to Shetland by the Norse, but it was, according to Mr. Marshall's showing, the name given by the Celts, and there is no evidence that they knew only the little "cattle" characteristic of Shetland.

Here is the case in a nutshell. There is *no* evidence that Shetland was ever called "Ealthar" by the Celts or anyone else. There is *no* evidence that the Norse mistook the name "Ealthar" for the name of the people, and so named "Hjaltland." There is *no* evidence that there is anything exceptional in the relation between singular "Hjaltr" and plural "Hjaltar." Using Mr. Marshall's method we might derive "Gothland" in the same way from, let us say, Gaelic "gaoth" (wind), through "Windland," which the Norse mistook for the name of the people in the plural and adopted as "Gotar," from which they formed the name of the place and also the singular. We might even derive Jutland from a word like "jar" (west), and say that "Jotar" is only a Norse mistake for "Westland." To the objection that Jutland is not west from Britain we might answer that that is a small matter; the name might have been given by some adventurous Celts yachting in the Baltic!

On the other side we have the following evidence. According to all analogies the name "Hjaltland" is derived from "Hjaltar," the name of its inhabitants. (Skotland, Skotar, Jutland, Jótar, and Gotland,

England, Ireland, Frankland, etc., etc.). Moreover, derivatives from the words indicate that this is so. The most important of such derivatives is the singular "Hjaltr," which is very strong evidence, as Mr. Marshall's own argument shows. Instead of proving nothing it proves a great deal, that we have such a singular in Icelandic of the classical period, just as we have singulars of Gotar and Jótar. On the other hand, had there been, as Mr. Marshall at first claimed, no singular, it would have proved very little for him. For example, Sweden is derived from the name of the people "Sviar," and there is no singular of the word. "Svenskr," given by Mr. Marshall, is not the singular of "Sviar," but a derived adjectival form. But not only do we have the singular in the case of "Hjaltar," we have also the derived adjective "Hjaltneskr" (Sheltish), and this, alongside of the adjectival "Hjaltlenzkr" (Shetlandish), which is surely a significant fact. (*Cf.* again "Gotar"). To cite against this instances from Celtic, Slavonic, etc., is of course to beg the whole question. The problem is, then, to determine who the "Hjalts" were, and if they were not the Celts who were they?

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A VISIT TO SHETLAND IN 1832.

(*From the Journal of Edward Charlton, M.D.*).

X.

(Continued from Vol. VI., p. 192).

GLOUP VOE (*continued*).

Friday, August 3. About 9 a.m. we were informed that Mrs. Henderson had arrived at Cullivoe on the preceding evening. We shouldered our guns and

walked over the hills to meet them, and discovered them comfortably seated, in Mr. Pole's store, over a bottle of porter. Of this delicacy I also partook, and often subsequently did I make a long pilgrimage from the hills in the centre of Yell to enjoy a draught of this beverage so rare in Shetland. The previous day had been perfectly calm and serene, but poor Mrs. Henderson maintained that the still, glassy ocean always made her far more ill than a boiling sea. The poor boatmen, I thought, must have had the heaviest time of it, as their labour at the oar ceased not for fourteen hours till they reached the landing place in Yell. We returned to Gloup with Mrs. Henderson, and on our way we called on Mr. Craigie, the schoolmaster, who was seated in a large room instructing some eight or ten of the rising generation of Shetland.

Saturday, August 4. At night the fishermen brought in a large quantity of very fine coral from the haaf.

Sunday, August 5. Went to Midbrake sands to collect shells, etc. Brought home a large quantity of shell sand, which proved, when examined, to be one of the best sands for minute shells in Britain. Walked to the end of Papal Ness to watch the heavy seas breaking on the rocks. A vein of hornstone traverses the gneiss and granite in this ness. Procured also a curious specimen of quartz from a vein, it closely resembling, in shape and colour, a Siberian beryl. On the top of this hill, near Houland, found a large quantity of garnets embedded in gneiss, but the specimens on the top were sadly weathered, and, as we had no hammer, we could not break off any fresh portions. Day very fine and warm. A beautiful vein of actinolite also exists in Papal Ness, from which I afterwards procured some very fine specimens.

Monday, August 6. Walked over the hills with my gun to Colvister, but got nothing rare, only a few

common insects, chiefly coleoptera. I had been told at Gloup that there was an oyster-dredge to be got at Sillervoe, near Colvister, but it miserably disappointed me. It consisted merely of a sharp spike of iron attached to the end of a long pole. At ebb tide, when the water is low upon the oyster beds, they transfix these shell-fish, one by one, with this most original weapon. Returned over the hills and tried, in vain, to get near a very large flock of plovers. On a small loch, not far from the head of Cullivoe, we met with a pair of red-throated divers and their young, but got neither, though the young bird was killed at the first discharge of our guns. It was, no doubt, swept by the wind under one of the hollow banks of the loch, for we could not anywhere find it, and the whole piece of water did not cover an acre and a half of ground. The old birds continued to fly round and round, just out of reach of our guns; we waited near the loch until near 10 p.m., but could not get a shot at them. It was now getting dusk, for the sun had set for some time before, when we came to the banks of a large lake, on which several rain geese were reposing for the night. Though they were at least a hundred and fifty yards from the shore, I fired amongst them with buck-shot, which most effectually roused them, and they dispersed in all directions. One poor bird, however, flew directly over my head and was brought down, with a broken pinion, into the water. It instantly dived, but evidently could not remain long beneath the surface, and was saluted with a shot from one or other of us whenever it appeared. To make sure, we charged our guns heavily with buck-shot, and thereby very nearly peppered each other as we stood on opposite sides of the lake. But it was all in vain, the poor wounded bird kept wisely in the centre of the lake, and at 12 p.m. we gave it up and returned home to Gloup. As we

started on the following day for Fetlar, we never were able to ascertain what became of the poor wounded bird in its watery prison. I was amused to find, as we were going home, that Mr. Henderson was by no means free from the Shetland superstitions regarding trows, fairies and other evil spirits that “walk, at dead of night, the lonely heath.” He had been told that a warrior, on a grey steed, was constantly to be seen at night on the hill of Gloup. We did not, however, meet him on this journey.

FETLAR.

Tuesday, August 7. Long and tiresome was the delay occasioned by cleaning our guns and packing ammunition, etc., before we departed for Fetlar. We left the house in company with the ladies, but feeling little inclined to regulate our paces by their slow rate of progress we pushed on to Mr. Pole’s, at Cullivoe, and soon engaged a boat with four men to row us to Fetlar. As the day was extremely calm a large six-oared boat was unnecessary, and we crossed the whole six miles of sea, between Cullivoe and Fetlar, in a small whilly.¹ When four men pull a whilly it is generally arranged that one man pulls the two-stroke oars (as they are termed in Shetland), and the two others sit on the aftermost bank together, whilst the fourth man steers the boat, and occasionally takes his turn at the oars. We landed at Urie, on the western coast of the island, and then engaged a lad to carry

¹ See Vol. vi., 191. Jakobsen, *s.v.* *kwilli*, (2) little boat (a) of about ten feet of keel, Unst; (b) four-oared boat, Fetlar. In both places it occurs in the form *hwilli*, which he suggests may be the same word as *kwilli*, a dent, *e.g.* in a basket, which has been put out of shape. In Unst it occurs as *hwilli*, possibly from **kulli*—in the same way as *kuff* < *kwiff*.

But can it have been so called from its resemblance to the small open oil lamp—O.N. *kola* > Shetland *koli* > *kwoli* > **kwilli* > *hwilli*; that is if *koli* > *kwilli*, as *kuff* > *kwiff*, as mentioned by Jakobsen.—ED.

our luggage to Jerome Johnston's house at Crosbister, near the centre of Fetlar. He led us by an uninteresting pathway, but very rugged withal, to the house we were in search of, which was certainly much superior in neatness, even externally, to those in its immediate neighbourhood. Mr. Johnston was not at home, and his servants seemed to understand but little about the entertainment of strangers. We deposited our luggage in the house, sent back the guide, and then strolled through some very highly cultivated ground to the beach of Town, on the south-eastern side of the island. The minister, Mr. Watson, of Yell, comes here once or twice a month to the church of Town, as the stipend is too small to support a resident pastor. The consequence has been that in this island, as in many others, more than half the population have gone over to the Methodists, who, of course, are ever ready to receive them. And, really, the labours of these men deserve attention as compared with the supine neglect of the Established Church. The name of Fetlar is said to be derived from Feide œ, or the "green island."¹ The valley of Town may vie in richness with that of Tingwall on the Mainland. It is covered by nearly an equal quantity of corn and meadow land, the size of the patches of either nowhere exceeding four or five acres. The corn grown here is, I believe, the white bearded oat and the common barley, which seems to flourish as well here as in the south of Scotland. The beach of Town lies at the head of Triesta bay; we carefully examined its ample extent of sand, but no new or rare shells presented themselves to our longing eyes. There were, however, numerous large and deeply coloured specimens of the *tellina tenuis*, *psaumobia ferroensis*, *maetra stultorum*, etc., etc. In winter, during the heavy gales, great quantities of shell-fish

¹ See Vol. v., p. 108.

are thrown up on the beach of Town, and I possess specimens of the *cyprina islandica* from that locality of four or five inches in diameter. In returning I crossed over the sandy dune that separates the Loch of Triesta from the sea. A large quantity of magnetic iron-ore, in the form of grains, occurs in the sand on the southern bank of the loch. It is found deposited in layers in the sand, which is said also to contain *iserine* and *sphene*. Magnetic iron, in the form of grains, occurs abundantly in the serpentine rocks of the neighbourhood, and is probably deposited in its present position by the waters of the lake. At the top of the beach of Town, a few yards above high-water mark, I picked up a beautiful *nerita*, but it was subsequently lost. We returned very hungry to Crosbister, where Mr. Johnston gave us a hearty welcome and a mighty bowl of porridge for supper, after which we drew our chairs to the fire, and, introducing a fourth friend to the party, in the person of the whisky bottle, we made ourselves most comfortable for the evening.

As the conversation proceeded I was surprised to find that Jerome Johnston had been long in Egypt with the British army, and that he could, moreover, give a most excellent description of the countries he had visited. His narratives were interspersed with various godly sayings, which carried one back to the days of the old Scottish covenanters; the Shetlanders are particularly prone to use such phrases as "wi' God's hjalp," "He abjuv will guide wis." Jerome was certainly, however no covenanter, but he had far more interest in my eyes as being one of the old udallers of Shetland, a class of men likely, in a few years, to become totally extinct. [The reader is referred for further information on the "udaller" to Dr. Hibbert and Dr. Edmondston, and a statement by the latter is quoted as to "the old Norwegian law of St. Olave or Olla"]. Such are

the old udal laws of Shetland, and Jerome Johnston would, no doubt, have been a sturdy sea robber in the days of Harald Haarfagra or Olaf hin hellige. Jerome's cottage was small, but pretty clean, and he accommodated us with an excellent bed.

Wednesday, August 8. This day was entirely devoted to geology. I examined the rocks and strata from the head of Triesta bay to the western side of the Ness of Lambhoga. The rock at the head of the bay was gneiss, and in one place I found traces of hornblende. Its general line of bearing was from S.W. to N.E., and the dip was at rather a smaller angle than in many other parts of Shetland, the angle of inclination varying from 15 to 32. The gneiss of Fetlar is much intersected with veins of granite, though not to so great an extent as is observable in the island of Yell. The colour of the rock was a reddish brown, and it was in many places broken, by the action of the sea, into precipices of 200 or 300 feet in height. At Lambhoga Ness, the great resort of the *peregrine falcon*, I observed a small bed of rather pure limestone, about three feet in thickness, and containing cubes of iron pyrites with a beautiful metallic lustre. [An impossible origin, *hof-garðr*, is given for Lambhoga, which Jakobsen derives from *lamb-hagi*, lamb pasture.] From the granite of Lambhoga are occasionally obtained rock crystals of considerable size and beauty. A little to the west of the Ness the felspar greatly predominates over the other two constituents of the granite, and the disintegration of the rock has produced a porcelain earth varying in colour from a deep yellow to the most brilliant white. This mineral product has, I believe, been examined by Mr. Wedgewood, but the result was by no means so favourable as was expected. The failure was ascribed to the want of a sufficient quantity of the earth for the experiment, but if that were the only difficulty it would be easily obviated, as the sub-

stance is close to the sea, and in very great abundance. Returned home about four, dined upon piltocks, smoked, wrote and read till bed time. Day fine.

Thursday, August 9. I continued my yesterday's walk from the west of the Ness of Lambhoga. Passing the house of the *soi disant* baronet, Sir Arthur Nicolson,¹ I came to a square camp which was considered by Dr. Hibbert and Mr. Low as of decided Roman origin. I am not an antiquary enough to determine this, but give here Dr. Hibbert's description. . . . But let this fort be Roman, Saxon, or anything else, it is most interesting to the geologist as marking the ceaseless inroads of the sea upon the land, one-half of the camp having already disappeared in the ocean. About a mile further to the west I came to the junction of the gneiss with the serpentine. The strata of gneiss are here much contorted by contrast with the serpentine, and exhibit a much more exclusively quartzose structure than before. Here I found some interesting minerals interposed between the serpentine and the gneiss. A variety of talc, of a black colour, and much resembling the common French chalk of commerce, was plentiful in the small inlets where the junction of the two rocks was most visible. I also found here, in a vein in the serpentine, crystals of talc of a light green hue, much indurated, and fully half an inch in length. A few hundred yards to the west of the spot I found the famous rock of serpentine which was celebrated, 150 years ago, by Brand, as causing fatal aberrations in the compasses of the ships that navigated the adjacent sound. Alas! if such ever were the case, its power, along with that of witches and evil spirits, has sadly diminished, for my compass was only affected when within two or three yards of the rock.

¹ Served heir to his "remote cousin," sir James Nicolson of that ilk and Lasswade, bt., in 1825, died 1863, aged 69 (*Grant's Zetland Family Histories*).

I rounded the point of Hammers Ness, and passing through some fields of corn, came again upon the diallage. I may here briefly mention the distribution of these rocks in Fetlar. The gneiss occupies the whole of the western part of the island, and is in contact with a bed of serpentine, which is nowhere above a quarter of a mile in breadth. A bed of diallage, of nearly equal thickness, succeeds to the serpentine, and is in its turn in contact with stratified beds of mica and of talc slate. These two last cross the island in a direction from north to south, diverging as from a common centre point at the head of the bay of Triesta, and continuing to increase in breadth to their northern limit. On my return to Crosbister I visited the diallage and serpentine rocks, and especially the chromate mine situated in the latter formation. In the vicinity of these I procured some fine specimens of talc.

Friday, August 10. Another day devoted to examining the rocks of the iron-bound coast of Fetlar. I geologised from Triesta bay to Funzie and Strandiburgh, but the rain came on at last and fell with such goodwill that I was forced to retrace my steps ere I could reach the limits of the clay slate beds on the north of the islands. Mr. Henderson spent the greater part of the morning at Lambhoga Ness, but obtained nothing but some very indifferent crystals of semi-transparent quartz. The first rock that presented itself east of Triesta bay was a glossy alum shale, in which the lustre is occasionally so highly metallic that it has been mistaken for plumbago. This rock alternated with beds of talc and mica slate, and was also intersected by several veins of dark coloured serpentine, and by some smaller veins of a very pure white quartz. At the extreme east point of the bay the rocks ran low down into the water, but in consequence of the ceaseless action of the ocean they were worn into most singular

and fantastic forms. A little to the south-east of this point lies the hamlet of Houbie, near to which are two burghs, both in ruins. [A pencil note "sketch of the burgh from Hibbert." After quoting a description of the broch from Hibbert he proceeds]. This bold robber's dwelling is admirably situated for its purpose. The walls are now very much in ruins, but the tremendously deep gio which encompassed it on two sides, whilst the sea formed a rampart of strength on the other, must have rendered it nearly impregnable in former times. At Houbie I again met with traces of diallage. In the very deep and narrow gio, on the eastern flank of the brough of Houbie, the rock presented quite a talcose character, and indeed in one spot became a very pure steatite. In Shetland the steatite goes by the name of kleber [No., *klæbersten*]. It is much used by the natives as an external application for the cure of burns, and, I am told, with the best effect. The name Klebergio, which is not infrequent in Northmavine and in the north isles, denotes an inlet where the steatite rocks abound. In the same spot I found a bed of serpentine containing a large quantity of amianthus and talc. Farther to the east the serpentine and chlorite slate alternate in beds of considerable size until near the southern point, which is named the Snap of Fetlar, where the mica slate again appears. Near the junction of this last rock with the serpentine I found a vein of purple-coloured asbestos, but the mineral was in no great abundance. Crossing the south-east point of the island I arrived at Funzie, the principal fishing station in Fetlar. Here Harald Haarfagra is traditionally reputed to have attempted a landing, when he invaded Shetland in the year 895. But the open bay of Funzie afforded no shelter for his ships, and the Norwegian king withdrew from the coast of Fetlar and disembarked his forces at Norwick in Unst. According to

Hibbert, the *Vandela*, a Swedish vessel, was wrecked here about ninety years ago, having on board £22,000 in silver bars and specie. By means of diving apparatus £18,000 was recovered from the ocean. At Funzie the primitive rocks are entirely concealed by the secondary, and do not make their appearance again till we arrive at the bay of Gruting, on the north side of the island. A heavy rain came on as I approached the buith of Funzie, and a fine looking old man welcomed me, in true Shetland style, with a hearty shake of the hand, and exclaimed: "Here's a guid walcum to da stranger lamm." The buith, which I entered, was filled with fishermen, who crowded round me with eager enquiries about the cholera which, with the late fearful storm, was the universal topic of conversation during my first visit to Shetland. I remember well that I was malicious enough to give them rather a coloured description of the ravages of the cholera, but the twenty days of quarantine in Bressay Sound still roused my indignation whenever the disease was spoken of. A noisy, though not an intellectual fellow-traveller, in the shape of a small pig, accompanied me from Funzie till I arrived within a mile of Crosbister. On my way I crossed over the lower part of the Vord Hill, which on the north terminates in a tremendous precipice, where the sea eagle has, from time immemorial, built its nest. The Vord Hill is entirely composed of a blackish green serpentine, though in some places, perhaps from the presence of iron, it has acquired a reddish tint. The bog iron ore is found abundantly on the surface of the ground in every part of Fetlar. On the previous evening Henderson had ascended with Jerome Johnston to the summit of Stackaberg, a hill in the vicinity of Crosbister, where a cairn or sepulchral monument of our Scandinavian ancestors had been opened by our curious host. Here, after some digging, they discovered the



BARROGILL, CASTLE, CAITHNESS.
From a photograph by Mr. D. Laing, Mey.

usual number of huge flat stones forming, together, a rude coffin to contain the remains of the deceased. Within this they found several urns containing a substance like burnt bones, but I saw none of these urns in their perfect state. I possess some of these interesting relics, they are most rudely shaped, having been apparently hollowed by the hand, and are composed of steatite, much resembling that of Klebergio of Houbie. Many such sepulchral urns are to be seen in the museum of antiquities at Copenhagen.

BARROGILL CASTLE, CAITHNESS.

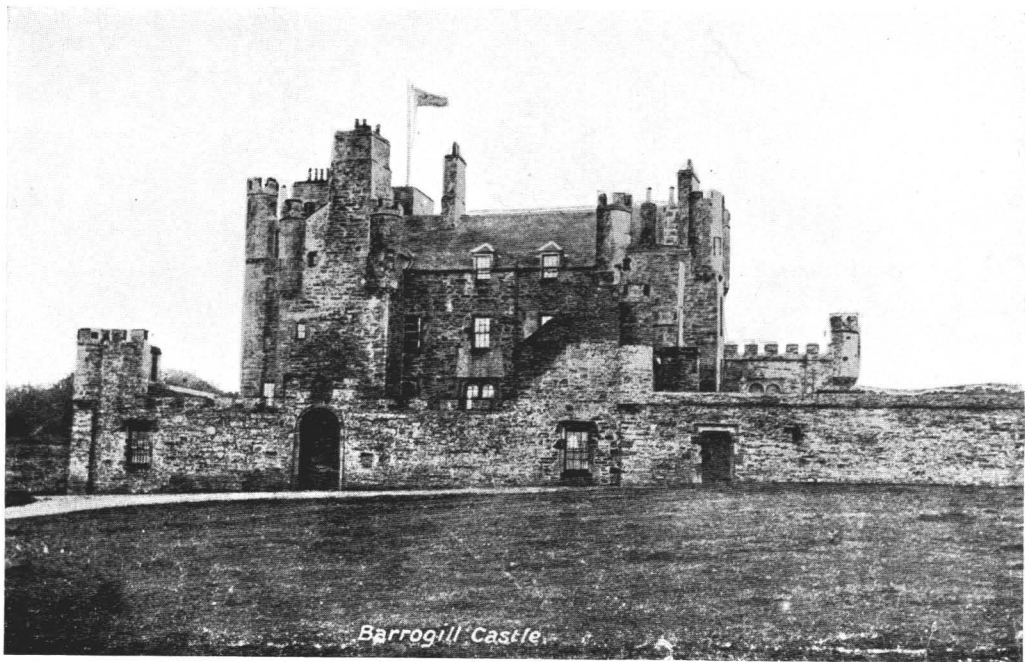
BARROGILL Castle, originally known as the Castle of Mey, one of the ancient seats of the earls of Caithness, is still a comfortable and commodious country residence. It was founded, if not built, by George the 4th earl of Caithness, who acquired the barony of Mey from the bishop of Caithness in 1566.

In the castle there is a carving with the Caithness and Montrose arms and mottoes, with the initials "G.S." and "E.G." and the date, "1566." These arms are no doubt those of George, the 4th earl, and Elizabeth Graham his wife, daughter of William, earl of Montrose. There is some uncertainty as to the exact date of its erection. In a footnote to the *History of Caithness*, J. T. Calder gives the date as 1606, but the building was probably carried out before this date, and the more likely period would be between the acquisition of the lands in 1566 and 1572, when the earl granted a charter of the Mey lands to his second son William, who became the first laird of Mey. William Sinclair, who is said to have been strangled in the dungeon of Girnigoe Castle by his elder brother, the imprisoned John, master of Caithness, died unmarried. He was succeeded by his brother George, the chancellor of Caithness, and founder of the Mey family of Sinclairs

and the later earls of Caithness. On the death of the earl in 1582, all his money was bequeathed to his youngest son, George of Mey. It is not unlikely that some of this money was used in completing, or adding to, the family residence between that date and his own death in 1616.

Sir James Sinclair of Mey, who was served heir to the title of the 12th earl of Caithness in 1790, repaired and added to the structure. In Macfarlane's *Geographical Collections*, written in 1726, the House of Mey is mentioned as being in a dilapidated condition. In the Old Statistical Account of the parish of Canisby, written in 1793, Barrogill Castle is referred to as "renewing its age apace under the additions and embellishments it is daily receiving from its noble owner." Above the iron studded doorway of the courtyard there are Sinclair arms carved in stonework, bearing the initials "J.S.S." and "C.S.S." joined by a heart, and the date "1762." Though considerably modernised and added to during last century, the castle still retains its distinctive 16th century features. Its jutting towers and corbelled turrets form a striking skyline; and, seen from a distance, as it stands on a rising ground overlooking the Pentland Firth, the aspect is decidedly pleasing. The earliest account of the Castle of Mey, is given by William Lithgow, the traveller, who visited and was entertained by Sir William Sinclair during the winter of 1629. He wrote, and dedicated to the Earl of Caithness, a long grandiloquent description of the building and the hospitality he received from the laird of Mey.

"Flank'd with the Marine coast, prospective stands,
 Right opposite to the Orcade Iles and Lands:
 Where I for floures, ingorg'd strong grapes of Spain
 And liquored French, both Red and White amaine:
 Which Palace doth containe, two foure-squared Courts
 Graft with brave works, where the Art-drawn pensile sports
 On Hall, high Chambers, Galleries, Office Bowres
 Cells, Roomes and Turrets, Platforms, Stately Towres."



BARROGILL CASTLE, CAITHNESS.

From a photograph by Mr. D. Laing, Mey.

In 1876 King Edward and Queen Alexandra, as Prince and Princess of Wales, visited Barrogill Castle as guests of James, the 14th earl, who was the engineering tutor of the king and his brothers, and the inventor of the "Caithness steam carriage," the first self-propelled road vehicle. In front of the castle grows a horse-chestnut planted by the king, and an ash tree planted by the queen.

In internal arrangements as well as architectural features, the castle bears evidence of antiquity. There is the vaulted kitchen with its huge fireplace and iron rings, the dungeon and similar gruesome relics of other days. It also has its traditions of blood-stained floors and haunted rooms. On the walls of the hall and principal rooms hang many portraits of those who figured in the early history of Caithness. Here also may be seen the old coloured arms of "Lord Sen-Klar," with the family motto, "Commit thy work to God," found in Roslin Chapel and forwarded to the north.

In 1889, on the death of George Philip Alexander Sinclair, the 15th earl of the Sinclair line, and the fourth and last of the Mey family, the estate and ancient residence of the earldom was willed to a college friend, Mr. Heathcote (now Mr. Heathcote-Sinclair), the present proprietor.

J. M.

AN ORKNEY TOWNSHIP BEFORE THE DIVISION OF THE COMMONTY.

XIV.

BY JOHN FIRTH, FINSTOWN.

(Continued from Vol. VI., page 187).

MARRIAGE—*continued.*

Though there are many people who deny the intoxicating properties of home-brewed ale, and we have heard even temperance advocates speak of it as a harmless beverage, the reader must have already noticed that the merriment of those wedding feasts was in direct ratio to the strength of the ale imbibed. "The cup which cheers but not inebriates" was then unknown in the northern isles, and the need for some stimulant was much felt by the Orcadian peasant, whose lot forbade him tasting freely even the few pleasures and comforts obtainable in those days. The pity of it was that when grain was scarce (as it often was) the people never thought of stinting the supply of ale, but turned into malt that which would have sustained them better had it been turned into meal. And here a custom which was observed down to the early decades of last century might be referred to viz., that of "Change Ale." In those days the cereal most cultivated was bere, or four-rowed barley. In the winter season great quantities of this were made into malt, from which ale was brewed at home. First, one family had a great broust, to the drinking of which all the families in the township were invited. The rant was kept up till the early hours of the morning, when many, returning to their homes in a state of hilarious inebriety, saw in the moonlight fairy wedding parties trooping over the knowes, and heard the strains of the fiddles which headed the elfin processions. One after another all the homes in the

district made their brousts and gave their Change Ale parties. In this way the greater part of the grain which ought to have provided them with bread for the summer was consumed, with the result that the daily fare of a large part of the year was very meagre and primitive. Though total abstinence had few, if any, devotees in Orkney in those bygone days, there were even then people of moderate habits who never indulged in drink to the extent of being intoxicated; but in general there was little joy in life apart from the exhilaration imparted by the ale cog. The daily accompaniment of the farmer's humble diet was home-brewed ale; by it his joys were deepened and his sorrows lightened; his entrance into life and his exit from it were alike marked by that conviviality which comes from the free use of the social glass.

BIRTH.

It was no uncommon occurrence at an accouchement for the mother and all her attendants to be the worse of drink, and this, combined with the fact that it was but seldom that a doctor or a trained accoucheuse was called, clearly shows that the successful result of such incompetent obstetrics may be pertinently described as "the survival of the fittest." Of course, every district possessed some experienced person who was able to take upon herself the duties of a midwife; but what with the want of skill, and the superstitious customs and drunkenness, it is surprising that more precious lives were not lost. One does not wonder that the Orcadian of that time possessed an inherent craving for strong drink, for the first thing given to a baby was a teaspoonful of toddy, and a dose of the same stimulant was believed to be an infallible cure for all his infantile ailments. One child, who eventually attained to robust womanhood, was, by the carelessness of the nurses, subjected to a trying ordeal in the early hours of her life. The women attendants, all more or less

“groggy,” had pronounced the child to be still-born, and as such it was laid aside. After a time the father expressed a desire to see it, and was told that he would find it on a shelf of the boss-press (a press in the wall of the gable-end of the house, having, like the almery, stone shelves).¹ On examination he discovered that the child showed unmistakable signs of vitality. The women by this time had evidently sobered considerably, for they set about using some means for its resuscitation, and were soon able to declare it “a brisk and weel-faured bit o’ bairn.” Not one or two, but sometimes as many as half a dozen women, were called to the house on an occasion of this kind to keep away the “peerie-folk”—those unearthly visitants who were particularly busy when a new arrival came. For several nights the neighbours, by turns, rocked the cradle all night, and watched so that the baby was not stolen away. If through any defect, either physical or mental, the child did not fulfil the promise of its infancy, the parents had no hesitation in saying that the fairies had taken away their child, and for it had substituted a weakling. To ensure a child’s good-luck its first drink had to be taken off silver, and though the humble Orcadian peasant would have preferred a silver cup or the proverbial silver spoon, he was not in his poverty to be baffled in his efforts to secure his child’s prosperity; so he placed a silver coin in the ram’s horn spoon, which, as a charm, acted, no doubt, as effectually as either of the former. But sometimes chill penury denied the household even the silver coin, in which circumstance it had to be borrowed from a less impecunious neighbour. A man well known in busi-

¹ Scot., *boss*, adj. hollow, empty, also applied to a large window forming a recess, a bay window. Cf., Orkn. *bozen*, *bozen-chimney*, a fireplace built in the wall; in Orphir *bozomed-in-chimney*, a stone built fireplace, with side walls and a space for fire, resembling a cow-stall, O.N. *báss*, a stall, and probably so applied to a cupboard in the wall. Cf. Ire. Eng., *boose*, a stall, Eng., *bosen*, etc., *do.*—ED.

ness in this locality, and who died only a few years ago, stated that he had often been called upon to lend a shilling for this purpose. It is told of a certain person, particularly desirous that his first-born should have plenty of this world's goods, that he, when the child's first drink was being administered, placed a silver coin in one of its hands, while the other hand was thrust into a basin of oats, and the baby fist was forced to relax and grasp up a handful of mettins. Had this solicitous parent lived long enough he, no doubt, would have been confirmed in his belief that the ceremony enacted at his daughter's birth had been instrumental in bringing her good fortune, for though up to middle life she had to struggle against grim poverty, in her later days she quite unexpectedly received a legacy in the shape of a small croft; and now, well over life's allotted span, she resides comfortably in her own home, and in a hearty old age enjoys the benefits of the Old Age Pension.

To ward off evil during her time of indisposition, the mother kept beside her, in the bed, a Bible and a knife, the peerie folk being equally as afraid of cold steel as of the Scriptures. We are aware of this custom being observed even so recently as the year 1887. An old lady well acquainted with the superstitious practices of former times, when paying a congratulatory visit, was quick to notice the end of a large Bible protruding from underneath the mattress. When relating the circumstance to some friends she jocularly remarked that she was sure the *gullie* (a large knife used for butchering pigs and cutting cabbages and hence called the butchering-gullie or kale-gullie) was not far off. Her astonished listeners asked for an explanation, and urged that the woman must have had the Bible there for reading; but such could not have been the case, for the bed occupied by the young mother and her child was of the long-doored, shut-in type, in whose dark enclosure it

was impossible for the keenest vision to discern even large type. It is remarkable how enlightened people, even within the last generation, believed in, and feared, the malicious tricks of the fairies on the occasions of births and deaths, though long since they had ceased to believe in their interference in the ordinary affairs of life.¹

In the township of Redland there was a grass gait² (path) which led from the infield pasture down to the cultivated land near to the Evie and Rendall road. This pathway was the track followed by the fairies as they came in procession from the hill on their way to the sea-shore in the grimmlings (twilight). It was believed that they returned to the hill by the same path in the morning, just before daybreak; so parishioners, who were aware of this, studiously avoided crossing the path at those uncanny hours; but two men from the south side of Firth, when going to Cottiscarth for a lady doctor (?), unfortunately encountered the fairies on one of their hill to shore journeys. The two men, pillars of the church, and of fair intelligence and education, asserted that at a particular point on the gait they parted company in a mysterious manner. Robbie, who was left on the road alone, pursued his journey across the Breck-o'-Lyde, calling for his companion as he proceeded. After a time Johnnie's voice responded from the meadows of Badyateun, fully a quarter of an hour's walk from the road. Johnnie declared that he had no knowledge as to how he was carried to the meadows, and firmly adhered to his belief that it was the work of the fairies. However, we are well aware that the men would have their imaginations fired by a glass of whisky or rum, in addition to the mug of strong ale with which travellers never failed to fortify themselves

¹ For another instance, which occurred within living memory, see Vol. 3, p. 6.

² O.N., *gata*.—ED.

before setting out. The same cause was doubtless responsible for Willie Aitkin's sudden transport from the door of Estaben on his way home with a jaik o' raw soowans in his hand. He averred that the first he kent o' himsel' was at the Knowe o' Steeringlo—a favourite haunt of the fairies, but during his aerial flight it seems he stuck tenaciously to his jaik o' soowans, for he and his wife Maggie "hid a guid supper a' hid whan he cam' hame."

After a birth all the neighbours on visiting terms were expected to call and offer their congratulations, and the more intimate acquaintances were specially invited to the blide-maet (blithe-meet) or joy-feast. Scones and ale or more ardent spirits were offered to the guests, who gave their best toasts, and duly expressed their admiration of the child, discreetly pre-facing their compliments by a brief ejaculatory prayer, such as, "Guid safe hid," or "Safe be hid." It was very unwise audibly to admire or praise a child without this safeguard, for should any untoward circumstance befall it, people were not slow to say that the little one had been *fore-spoken*. If the ejaculation happened to be omitted, some interested person would seek to counteract the evil influence by hastily adding, "Oh, spake o' hid wi' a guid tongue." "Too good to live" was an old adage in which a great number of people had a strong belief. Any child of a particularly quiet and docile nature was spoken of as being ready for the grave; and if a child that exhibited an unusually affectionate disposition or great precocity died in early life, one often heard such remarks as, "We might hae kent hid wad be taen, for it was sic a fainfu'¹ ting," or "Hid was ower weel seen hid wad never kame (comb) a grey head, for it was as witty (knowing or intelligent) as a' auld body. Ay, hid was truly a faey² bairn."

¹ Eng. *fain*, glad, affectionate, O.N. *feginn*, adj. glad.—ED.

² Eng. Sco. Ir., *fey*, O.N. *feigr*, fated to die.—ED.

BAPTISMS.

The next event of infancy was the baptismal ceremony, and it was considered necessary to have this performed as soon as possible, lest the little one should die, the death of an unbaptized infant being considered a dire calamity; so when the child was only a few days old it was carried to the church, attended by several females, who, of course, were plentifully primed for the ordeal with an unlimited quantity of home-brewed ale. On one such occasion the attendants, having evidently partaken of a stronger liquor, set out in a somewhat jollified mood with the little one well wrapped in shawls. They had to walk from the district of Coubister to the parish kirk, a couple of miles distant. "A neebour man," James Horrie, who chanced to follow the path they had taken, was surprised to find the child lying fast asleep on the grassy pathway between the houses of Wheena and Savil. He picked it up, tucked it under his wide coat, and hurried on to overtake the women; and the fact that he had to travel about half a mile before he overtook them at Kelda Brig down the Braes of Horroldshay, where they were stepping along unaware of their loss, and still jauntily hugging the bundle of shawls, shows that they were in a sorely muddled condition. Any outcry the child would naturally have made, when slipping to the ground, had been prevented by a dose of toddy, sufficient to ensure its entire quiescence until the close of the impending rite. At the baptism, if the mother was able to be present, she was always accompanied by the child's name-mother or some other near relative, on whom devolved the duty of carrying the child. It was quite common that when two or three children were baptized at one time they were accompanied by twice as many women. Those attendants and all the neighbours were invited to the christening feast, which took place on their return home from church. To be invited

to a *cirsening*, as it was termed, was esteemed a high honour. The women dearly loved the gossip, and though the fare was plain and homely, consisting of scones, bread, cheese and ale, there was plenty of it; and if their minds were more affected by the glass of whisky with which the feast was rounded off than by the solemnity of the preceding ceremony, who, that recognises the gloom and austerity of their daily life, shall dare condemn them?

To have been "bapteezed oot o' ae water" was looked upon as a permanent bond of friendship; but in the event of a male and female being presented at the same time, the minds of the parents were sorely exercised as to the order of arrangement before the minister, so that the male child should be baptized before the female; for, if it should happen otherwise, fears were entertained that the girl, on reaching womanhood, would be afflicted with a full flowing whisker, while the other would remain beardless to the end of his days.

At one baptism the father's conduct, through absent-mindedness, tested the gravity of the congregation to a great degree. It was not customary then, as now, to have the child's name written on a slip of paper ready to be handed to the officiating clergyman; and when the minister asked for the name, the father, whose name was Peter, promptly replied "Peter," upon which the mother burst out in a shrill and reproving shout, "Thoo're dotin', Peter; this is Willie; peerie Peter's hame."

The naming of an infant caused much cogitation on the part of the parents. Every well-cared-for child must needs be provided with a name-father and name-mother, after whom or by whom it received its name. It was the duty of the name-mother to carry the child into church; and, though the name-father and name-

mother did not assume the part of sponsors, they were expected to take a special interest in their name-child; and it was hoped by the parents that their little one might inherit at least the virtues and graces, if not anything of monetary value, from its name-parents. The name of the new baby was guarded with great secrecy. For that to become public before baptism was regarded as detrimental to the child's best interests, and anyone making enquiry regarding the name was looked upon with disfavour. In connexion with this an amusing dialogue took place between the first official registrar of the then united parishes of Firth and Stenness and a man who came to record the birth of his child. The man willingly and unhesitatingly gave all particulars necessary for filling up the schedule except the child's name, and that, he affirmed, he would not disclose to any man but the minister. The registrar explained over and over again why the name must be given, but the man remained obdurate, asserting that the name could not be revealed till it had been announced at baptism. "Well," said the registrar at last, "it will cost you a day's journey back here, and I shall fine you a shilling besides." The man turned round and for a few minutes gazed through the window in profound meditation. Then suddenly wheeling round, he burst out, "Bi me saul! I'll risk hid"; and in a hesitating voice he mentioned his daughter's name.

Prior to the passing of the Registration Act, 1855, the only record of births was the list of baptisms kept by the minister, and very often when changes came in the ministry those records were lost. It was, however, customary to have a list of all the names of a family, with their dates of birth, written out in the big Family Bible, and if this were omitted there was seldom any other means by which ages could be ascertained. In passing, it may be mentioned that in the absence of any other available data the Family Bible is frequently used

by the Pension Officer when determining whether or not the applicant has reached the age to qualify him or her for an Old Age Pension.

(To be continued).

NOTES FROM THE TONGUE PRESBYTERY RECORDS.¹

THE Presbytery of Tongue was erected into a new Presbytery by an Act of the General Assembly in 1726. In their Act the General Assembly say that “having heard the brethren from the Presbyteries concerned; and it being informed that the minister of the parishes after named, whereof this Presbytery is to consist are some of them twenty-four, others forty and forty-two, and one of them fifty-two miles distant from the seat of their Presbyteries, so that they can seldom attend the same, which is very uneasy both to ministers and people,” and also for other reasons mentioned the General Assembly, “judging that the erections after mentioned may tend to the interest of religion and advantage of the country, do therefore disjoin the parishes of Diurness, Edrachillis, Tongue, and Farr, from the Presbytery of Caithness, and the parishes of Kildonan and Assint from the Presbytery of Dornoch,² and do hereby erect those six parishes into a Presbytery by themselves, to be called the Presbytery of Tongue, and to have their meetings for ordinary at Tongue; and do appoint their first meeting to be there upon the first Wednesday of October next to come; and until

¹ These Notes are from the Note-Books of the late Rev. Angus MacKay, Westerdale, with the exception of those in square brackets which are supplied by the Rev. Donald Munro, Ferintosh, Ross-shire. The Synod Register extracts are supplied by the Rev. D. Beaton, Wick.

² The Parishes of Kildonan and Assynt were, at a later date, rejoined to the Presbytery of Dornoch.

all the parishes in that Presbytery be fully planted the General Assembly appoints the Presbyteries of Dornoch and Caithness to send correspondents to the Presbytery of Tongue." The Presbytery accordingly met on 5th October, and entered in their minutes the Assembly's Act erecting the Presbytery.

5th October, 1726.—At this meeting there was laid before the Court a letter from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, and also a letter from the Committee for the reformation of the Highlands, containing directions relative to missionaries employed upon the King's Bounty. Such missionaries had to have their loyalty assured, as appears from this letter.

On account of the "clamant state" of Assynt "wholly destitute of any means of instruction" a communication is made by the Court to the "Committee for the reformation of the Highlands" craving the services of an itinerant preacher for said parish. Meanwhile John MacKay, Latheron, was appointed catechist of Assynt.

[Mr. Andrew Robertson presently in the Presbytery of Caithness produced satisfactory certificates of his suitable behaviour while in Caithness. These certificates were sustained, and he was asked to continue his diligence in the work of the mission in the parishes of Tongue and Farr which are vacant. As he was to be employed by the Presbytery he was asked to preach a popular sermon before them so that they might become acquainted with his talents. The sermon was to be preached at next meeting of Presbytery from the text Phil. i. 27].

The catechists within the bounds of the Presbytery at this date were:—Donald Happy, Aenas MacKay, William MacKay, Hugh MacKay, and John Munro.

"The Presbytery finding that the parish of Durness is divided by a kyle so that there must be another preaching place besides the kirk, appoint that when

my Lord Reay or his eldest son lives in Durness, the minister preach four Sabbaths in the church and the 5th at Westmoin," and the Presbytery "further recommend him to have one discourse in English at least each Sabbath at Durness."

4th January, 1727.—Mr. Andrew Robertson preached his trial sermon before the Presbytery. [At the same meeting he resigned the clerkship of the Presbytery.]

The Presbytery received 48 copies of the Confession of Faith in Irish from the Committee for the reformation of the Highlands for use within their bounds.

Regarding the vacancy at Farr Mr. Robert Gordon, factor for the Lord Strathnaver, wrote that his lordship inclined to give the parish to the Rev. Andrew Robertson then in the bounds. The Presbytery agreed to meet at Farr to moderate in a call to the said Mr. Robertson because it was considered "the people had Mr. Andrew Robertson in view."

"The Presbytery finding that many in the respective parishes of their bounds have not the Assembly's Shorter Catechism do recommend to their catechists to employ the most of their time in teaching the Shorter Catechism and also that they read Vincent's and other sound explications thereof to the people and that at the direction of their respective ministers."

9th January, 1727.—Rev. William Rose according to appointment moderated in a call to Rev. Andrew Roberston.

15th March, 1727.—[The moderator (Mr. Brodie) reported that the S.P.C.K. school at Knockbreck was visited according to appointment.] Assynt is still without a minister and there is no stipend for him. The Assembly is to be approached to provide a stipend or "for having a process for a stipend for Assynt."

When Mr. Andrew Robertson, who was called to Farr, was asked what his mind was, he said:—"It was

nottour there was no gleib in Farr that he can have access to nor a stipend but upon a precarious footing." The Presbytery decided to lay the matter before the Assembly so as to procure a proper stipend and glebe. Owing to the extent of the parish it is hoped that a new one may be erected out of it. Mr. Robertson agrees to accept the parish for four years and if the greivances be not removed by that time he shall be free to "seek transportation."

17th March, 1727.—At Farr. Presbytery appoint the 20th March for the ordination of Rev. Andrew Robertson.

Mr. Rose, Kildonan, who is one of the Commissioners to the Assembly, has supply for five Sabbaths given him by other members of the Presbytery.

26th April, 1727.—At Tongue. Mr. William MacKay, probationer, ordained minister of Tongue.

It was rported that there was a Gaelic-speaking probationer, Mr. William Scobie, in the Presbytery of Strathbogie, the Presbytery resolved to ask him to be an itinerant preacher in Assynt.

An additional grant for salary to the Assynt catechist was reported to the Prsbytery from the Committee for reformation of the Highlands. The names of the catechists within the bounds of the Presbytery at this date were :—Hugh Munro, Eddrachillis; Aenas MacKay, Durness; Donald Happy, Tongue; William MacKay, Farr.

A day of public thanksgiving was appointed at the unanimous desire of all the people for the late erections and the speedy settlements of ministers which is such a divine blessing; and that "God would in a special manner remarkably bless the noble and eminent family in this country who have contributed so much to the beautifying of the house of God in their bounds."

27th April, 1727.—At Farr. Robert MacKay, tutor of Farr, and Donald Munro, liferenter of Rynvie, present.

It was found that the manse of Farr needed repairs to the extent of £343-6-8. “The parishioners being obliged to cast and lead divetts and thatch the manse also to lead all the timber necessary for it.” The former minister, Mr. MacPherson, spent £209-15-4 on repairing the manse which his widow now sought to recover.

14th June, 1727.—At Farr. John MacKay of Kiratomy appears as representative elder for the kirk-session of Farr.

[It was reported that John MacKay was appointed to Assynt pursuant to a commission from the Society for the reformation of the Highlands.]

[22nd June, 1727.—At Dornoch. The Synod “on enquiry found that the parish of Assint which is eighteen miles in length and sixteen miles in breadth has been now severall years vacant and before that was supplied by an Episcopal incumbent who was never of any considerable use to the parish and for many years before his death was by age and indisposition rendered incapable of exerting any part of his office except to baptize and marray so that the people are grossly ignorant and most of them being under the influence of persons disaffected to the Government are a ready prey to such Popish priests as may frequent a considerable Popish family shortly expected there. That there is in that parish neither church, manse, gleib or modified stipend, the late incumbent haveing only payed him what stipend the heritors pleased so that there must be a difficulty to find any person who will accept of the charge of a parish attended with so many inconveniences and grievances till some of them be previously removed, particularly the intenting of a process for the modification of a stipend is absolutly

necessary before an intrant's accepting that charge." (*Register of the Synod of Caithness and Sutherland*.)

[22nd June, 1727.—At Dornoch. It was found that there were no elders in the bounds of the Presbytery with the exception of Lord Reay in Tongue, James MacKay in Kirtomy and Donald MacKay, Breacachie, in Farr (*Book of MacKay*, p. 199, here gives *William MacKay*, Gnubeg).]

[9th August, 1727.—At Durness. Mr. Murdo Mac-Donald gave in a list of persons suitable for elders.

The Presbytery were informed by a letter from the Committee for the reformation of the Highlands that Mr. William Scobie, probationer, in the bounds of the Presbytery of Strathbogie is under appointment to repair to the bounds of this Presbytery in order to serve as an itinerant preacher in the parish of Assynt.

At same meeting Mr. Brodie reported that Hugh Munro, catechist, Eddrachillis was dead and recommended that Donald MacKay as a suitable young man be appointed and he being present was examined. (Donald MacKay entered on his work as catechist in Eddrachillis in beginning of November. Mr. Brodie described him as a "hopeful young man in the bounds").]

10th January, 1728.—John MacKay of Melness is present as a ruling elder. Hugh MacKay in Kirkiboll is appointed clerk at one crown a year from each minister as salary. The heritors of Farr paying no attention to intimation from the pulpit the matter is referred to the Presbytery who are asked to fix the sum needed to repair.

£5 raised in Farr for the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge.

[6th March, 1728.—At Tongue. Sederunt:—Mr. John MacKay, Lairg; Mr. Andrew Robertson, moderator; Mr. George Brodie; Mr. Murdo Mac-Donald; Mr William MacKay; Mr. William Rose,

Kildonan; with John MacKay of Melness, ruling elder. (Messrs. MacKay, Lairg, and Rose, Kildonan, were correspondents from the Presbytery of Dornoch).]

25th June, 1728.—At Tongue. The Rev. Andrew Robertson reports that one in his parish being publicly rebuked by order of the session for Sabbath desecration began to rail at the minister administering rebuke. The Presbytery authorise Mr. Robertson to deal with him and put “him under the lesser excommunication with certification of being censured with the greater if he persists.”

12th September, 1728.—At Achnaheglish. Mr. Scobie ordained minister of Assynt. The Presbytery find that there is neither church, manse, nor glebe there nor school nor legal stipend.

30th October, 1728.—At Tongue. Reported to the Presbytery that Rev. William MacKay, minister of Tongue, died 21st instant.

[Mr. William Henderson got a commission to be master of the S.P.C.K. school at Knockbreck.]

10th April, 1729.—At Farr. To this meeting there came three old men to depone as to the state of the manse of Farr when the late Mr. MacPherson was settled there and said “that a short time after Master Donald MacIntosh (who was Mr. John MacPherson’s immediate predecessor) had left the parish of Farr the whole of the manse fell and was entirely ruinous excepting one small room with a loft and a cellar of one couple room.”

[All the catechists in connexion with the Royal Bounty, with the exception of William MacKay, catechist in the parish of Farr, who was sick, appeared at this meeting of Presbytery.] On examination of the catechists it was found that in the parish of Farr there are 200, in the parish of Tongue 300, in Durness 250, and in Assynt 21 persons, who can repeat the whole of the Shorter Catechism, and many who can repeat a part.

Adam Steel, student in divinity and chaplain to Lord Reay, was licenced.

11th June, 1729.—At Tongue. William MacKay, catechist at Farr, reports that 250 can repeat the whole of the Catechism in his division of the parish “besides 140 pretty far advanced.”

[19th June, 1729.—At Dornoch. At this meeting of Synod:—“The Presbytery of Tongue gave in a representation of Poperie’s beginning to get footing in their bounds the tenour whereof follows:—That the Lady Assint one of the heritors of the parish of Assint, who had been educated Protestant, had apostatized to Popery and does all she can to discountenance the ordinances dispensed by the parish minister, having sent for one Master Alexander Macra, a Popish priest, to baptize her child which he accordingly did on the twenty-fifth day of May last in the dwelling house of the Laird of Assint and the said Lady Assint hath taken into her service one Mistress MacDonald, a Papist, in order to instruct her more fully in Popish principles, which MacDonald was recommended to her family by Master Macra, the priest. The said Master Macra stayed with the Lady three severall Lord’s Days where he performed mass and other Romish ceremonies and John MacKenzie of Ardloch and his brother, two Popish gentlemen, attended service. The Synod having heard and considered the said representation did appoint report thereof to be made in our letter to the Commission that they may direct the said Presbytery of Tongue to such methods as will be most effectually for hind’ring the further spreading of Popery in that country.” (*Register of the Synod of Caithness and Sutherland.*)]

20th August, 1729. It is reported to the Presbytery that the Committee for the reformation of the Highlands have deposed John MacKay, catechist in Assynt, for not doing his duty and appointed William Gordon in his place. The Presbytery having no complaint

from Mr. Scobie continue John MacKay and at a later date the Committee withdraw their sentence. The salaries of catechists were £8 sterling per annum.

11th June, 1730.—At Tongue. Mr. Walter Ross, minister at Creich inducted at Tongue.

A certain Murdoch in Assynt interrupted Mr. Scobie when preaching—the matter is referred to the legal adviser of the Church at Edinburgh who informs the Presbytery that the said Murdoch is liable by Act of Parliament to the loss of all his goods besides church censure. The case is referred to Lord Reay, “Sheriff of that part of the shire.” [The Presbytery also brought the case before the Synod intimating that Mr. Scobie “was insolently interrupted in time of divine worship on the Lord’s Day by Murdoch MacKenzie alias Dow, drover.” The Synod wrote a letter to Lord Reay, the sheriff of the bounds to deal with the “said Murdach.” (*Register of the Synod of Caithness and Sutherland*).]

[22nd June, 1730.—At Thurso. The Synod’s Committee on Overtures transmitted “simpliciter to the Synod a petition from Master William Scobie, minister at Assint, representing that in summer last he and his family were disturbed on a grassing pertaining to his gleib by a number of ruffians sent from Master Baillie, factor to the Laird of Balnagown and Thomas Ross, younger of Catropie, to dispossess him of his just property as minister of Assint and that when he had endeavoured to defend himself they had barbarously attacked him and beat him to the effusion of his blood and therefor craved the Synod’s assistance and concurrence to bring the said rioters to condign punishment. The Synod having heard and considered the said representation judge that supposing the truth thereof the rioters should be punished as law directs and therefore did and hereby do advise the said Master Scobie to prosecute them before the shiriff of Sutherland or any

other competent judge." (*Register of the Synod of Caithness and Sutherland.*)]

19th August, 1730.—Mr. Andrew Robertson reported that Farr kirk-session had appointed William MacKay, Langwell, as their representative elder to the Presbytery.

Hugh MacKay was Synod bursar. Mr. Robertson, Farr, called to Kiltearn, Ross-shire.

Collections were appointed by the Assembly to be made for building harbours, bridges, churches, in various places throughout Scotland. The Presbytery replied that they would make collections for pious uses, but as for harbours, etc., they were too poor to do so.

Donald Sutherland alias Happy, catechist at Tongue.

NEWS NOTES.

Northern Chronicle. Some old Argyllshire records from Kirk session minutes and Inverary Castle are described (Jan. 14), of the years, 1616-1651 and 1715. A cist reported found at Burgie Lodge Farm (Nov. 19). Frasers of Belladrum, continued (Oct. 1—Jan. 28); these articles are full of valuable information, extracts from charters, prices of agricultural produce, reports of courts of bailiary, etc. The abduction of lady Grange in 1732, and her imprisonment in the Hebrides for fifteen years, a story of Jacobite times is related (Jan. 28).

John O' Groat Journal. Folklore of fishing by Edward Lovett, in which he refers to the Shetland custom of putting 'blugga banes' of halibut in a boat for luck; the fishing charm consisting of the T-shaped bone of a sheep's head, known as Thor's hammer, and the twig of a rowan tree, both of Scandinavian origin (Sept. 26). Old Friendly Societies of Caithness (Sept. 26). Wick fifty years ago (Oct. 31). Caithness and its folk a hundred years ago by J. T. Crowe, giving the remarkable observations of a minister, Rev. Jas. Hall, 1807 (Jan. 16, 23). Geneology of the Cormacks. Caithness poetry of the fifties, by W. P. B. (Jan. 30).

Orkney Herald. The natural history notes are particularly interesting this quarter, giving reports from Auskerry, Pentland Sherries, St. Kilda, etc. (Oct. 1, 29. Jan. 21).

Orcadian. Capture of a *Manxman* at Hoy (Sept. 13).

Glasgow Weekly Herald has a good article on 'Lewis Place-Names' of Norse origin.

Old-lore Miscellany

OF

ORKNEY, SHETLAND, CAITHNESS AND SUTHERLAND.

VOL. VII.

PART II.

APRIL, 1914.

NOTES.

THE GEORGE MACINTOSH DONATION TO THE POOR OF THURSO.—This was an annual donation to the poor of Thurso, given by Mr. George MacIntosh, London, in memory of his father. Each year a sermon was preached in April to the youth of Thurso, and in the same month five guineas were distributed, according to the clerk of the kirk-session, “to the poor of this town, etc., which was distributed in the following manner, viz., to the minr., 10/-; to the kirk officers, 3/-,” and to others sums ranging from 2/6 to 5/-. Two guineas were given annually to a boy going to a trade from the school of Thurso. The letter in which Mr. MacIntosh intimated his donation to the kirk-session is given verbatim in the Thurso Kirk-Session Records (3rd Feb., 1806), and is as follows:—“Thurso, 18th Augt., 1786. Dear Sir, I have for some time had it in contemplation to erect a memorial over my father’s grave. The little attention paid in this town to the repository of their dead, and the indecent custom now prevailing of raising dunghills over the ashes of our forefathers, made me apprehensive such a design might have been frustrated by some such persons as have lately pulled down the churchyard wall to build up houses. To prevent as much as possible such a shameful practice, I have thought of an expedient which, if it meet your approbation as it has that of others whom I have consulted, will be put in execution as early as the next season can admit. I propose erecting a pillar in which

is to be built a stone with the inscription I sent you some time ago, that it may become the care of the inhabitants and convey its memorial to the latest posterity. I mean to endow it with a gift of five guineas per annum, which I shall myself take care to pay during my own life, and will make a suitable provision for a Fund to supply that sum annually after my decease; such money to be applied as follows: Ten poor people to be nominated on the eighth day of April in every year, five by the minister and elders and five by the town magistrates. Such poor shall in regular rotation one by one receive for cleaning, sweeping, and scraping round the pillar every Saturday in the year one shilling, amounting annually to two pounds twelve shillings sterling. One boy leaving school going to learn a handicraft trade, educated at the town school, must have been there not less than two years and adjudged by proper persons to be the best scholar in case of a competition—two pounds sterling. An annual gift to the minister for dispensing the endowment attending on the eighth day of April in every [year] to nominate the poor and declare the successful boy, when it is also requested he will publicly announce the nature, origin, and regulation of the institution with proper exhortations to render youth emulous and the aged virtuous—ten shillings sterling. Gift to the kirk officers for their extra trouble in opening the kirk for this service and regular attention—ten shillings sterling.

“The above plan I willingly submit to any regulations you may think proper with only one observation—that in case any of the poor to be nominated shall neglect his or her duty, any person giving such information to the minister or magistrates shall be appointed or have the appointment of another person in room of the defaulter, who shall never again be eligible to the charity. As it is my wish to see the whole put in execution as soon as possible, not having been so fortunate

as to meet you here, let me request your answer, that I may know whether I must turn my attention to some other quarter, although I confess a partiality to my native parish being the spot where the sacred remains of my dear father are deposited, and therefore can never be looked upon with indifference by, dear sir, your obedient humble servt., George MacIntosh. The Revd. Mr. Patrick Nicolson, Thurso.”

MINUTE OF HERITORS' MEETING ANENT SALARY OF THURSO SCHOOLMASTER.—The following minute throws some light on the salary of the Thurso dominie at the beginning of the 19th century, and also on the condition of the school buildings:—“Thurso, 9th Sept., 1803.—At a meeting of the Heritors of the Parish of Thurso and the Revd. Patrick Nicolson, minr. thereof, held to take into consideration the Act (43 George 3, Cap. 55) for making better provision for the parochial schoolmasters in Scotland.

“Present:—Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, Baronet; George Paterson, one of the magistrates of Thurso; William Sinclair of Freswick; and the Revd. Patrick Nicolson, minr. of Thurso, who made choice of the said Sir John Sinclair to be preses.

“The meeting having proceeded to consider the second clause of the Act, they are of opinion that in consideration of the extent, population and other circumstances of the parish, that it is expedient to cause the salary of the schoolmaster to be the maximum allowed by the Act, viz., four hundred merks Scots per annum, and they desire that a copy of this resolution, signed by the Preses of the meeting, shall be delivered to the schoolmaster as his authority for collecting and receiving the salary hereby fixed on and determined, and they ordain the same to be proportioned on the different heritors according to their respective valuation.

“The meeting then proceeded to consider the 8th

clause of the Act regarding the schoolhouse, dwelling-house and garden, find that the schoolmr. is well accommodated with a dwelling-house and that the school is one of the best in Scotland. But with respect to the garden as it only contains one-sixth part of an acre, they are of opinion that the sum of 25/- be proportioned among the Heritors for making up the deficiency. The meeting then proceeded to consider the 18th clause of the Act, and they resolved to fix the school fees as follows, viz. For reading English, 2/6; for reading and writing, 3/6; for the same with arithmetic, 4/6; for reading, writing, arithmetic, and Latin, 6/-. Baptisms, 1/-; Marriages, 2/-; certificates, 1/-; and extracts, 2/-.—(Signed) JOHN SINCLAIR, Preses."

DISUSE OF THE BELL AT FUNERALS IN THURSO.—The following minute from the Thurso Kirk Session Records refers to a grievance felt by the grave diggers of Thurso:—"The grave diggers represented that many now do not employ the bells at burials as formerly, and of course their fees are smaller. The session authorises them to augment the price of the graves from 1/6 to 2/- from such as do not use the bells at the burial of the dead, but the poor to remain the same as before." (2nd Dec., 1822).

ILLEGAL USE OF MORT-CLOTHS BY THURSO SOCIETIES.—"The Kirk-session have been told that the Society of Weavers and Society of Fishermen in Thurso are using severally mort-cloths of their own in burying their dead without asking or obtaining leave from the Kirk-session of this parish, and that to the great injury of the poor's funds. The Kirk-session find that according to law and practice in Scotland the session has the exclusive privilege of keeping and hiring out mort-cloths for the benefit of the poor. Therefore they did and hereby do prohibit you from this date, from using your own mort-cloths among yourselves and

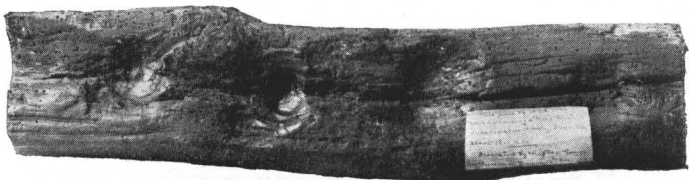


KING ST. ÓLAFR.



EARL, ST. MAGNÚS.

From photographs by T. Kent, Kirkwall.



PIECE OF OAK USED FOR RAISING NEED-FIRE OR
'TEINE-EIGINN,' circa 1808.

From a photograph.

from hiring them out to others. At the same time you shall have the benefit of any of the mort-cloths kept by the session on the same moderate terms with others within the parish, and they order their Treasurer to cause the officer to serve a copy of this notice on one of the office bearers of each Society with certification, etc." (Thurso Kirk Session Records, 7th March, 1825).

It would appear the Society of Fishermen paid no attention to the above warning, so in the following year "the session find no alternative but to imploy a man of business to take legal steps against them, not only to stop them encroaching on the funds of the poor in future but to cause them to repay to the Treasurer of the Kirk-session all the money they have obtained from the poor's funds since they got that mort-cloth." In 1828 St. Peter's Lodge of Operative Masons were guilty of a similar offence, and they too had to face "a man of business." The sums paid for the use of the mort-cloth were devoted to the poor, and the Kirk-session jealously guarded their interests.

THE ULBSTER STONE.—It will be learned with gratification by antiquaries generally that this famous Caithness symbol stone has, through Sir Archibald Sinclair, of Ulbster, been now placed under the care of His Majesty's Office of Works. Sir Archibald deserves the sincere thanks of all interested in our early monuments for interesting himself so much in the matter. The stone has been removed from its exposed position in the grounds of Thurso Castle, and it will be carefully attended to by those whose experience and training will be brought to bear to arrest any deterioration of the surface of the stone.

SS. ÓLAFR AND MAGNÚS.—By the kind permission of Mr. T. Kent, Kirkwall, photographs of statues of SS. Ólafr (king) and Magnús (earl), from St. Magnus' Cathedral, Kirkwall, are reproduced here. The stone

niches and attached statues are rough at the sides and backs, and appear to have been built into a wall (probably the reredos of the high altar); the dimensions are—S. Ólafr, 25½in. × 10in. × 8in. thick, S. Magnús, 29in. × 11in. × 8in. thick. Mr. Kent is thanked for these dimensions.—EDITOR.

TEINE-EIGINN.—The Rev. George Sutherland, U.F. Manse, Bruan, Wick Parish, recently presented to our Museum a small piece of oak, at one time used for raising a “need-fire” or *teine-eiginn*. The wood, which has been sawn off from a larger log, measures about two feet in length and from four to five inches on the side of the square. On one side there are three cavities, about six inches apart, and which show the action of fire. Mr. Sutherland has since supplied the enclosed letter relating to the gift. Houstry, the scene of the *teine-eiginn* described by Mr. Sutherland, is in the adjoining parish of Latheron; and, regarding his reference to the broch or “tulloch” there, up to comparatively recent times, to intermeddle with any of these was considered sacrilege.

The late Dr. George Henderson believed that the name *teine-eiginn* (need-fire) arose in Teutonic from the friction required to produce the fire, and regards the Norse *eikin* (oaken) as the real origin of the Gaelic *eiginn*, as he thinks, when the Norse rite became known, the Gaels may have seized rather on the name of the wood itself.

At page 213 of *Survivals in Belief among the Celts*, Dr. Henderson quotes Ramsay of Ochtertyre's account of the *teine-eiginn* as being one of the oldest and the best. At page 99 in *Norse Influence on Celtic Scotland*, he quotes an account Grimm gives from the Isle of Mull for 1767, which is somewhat similar to that given by Mr. Sutherland.—GEORGE BAIN, Librarian, Wick Parish Carnegie Public Library.

The following is a short account of the *Teine-eiginn* stick which I brought to you :—

Robert Gunn, MacDhaidh (*i.e.*, David's son) lived in a house close to a broch (tulloch) in the centre of the hamlet of Houstry. He made a garden, still extant in a dilapidated condition, beside the tulloch, and excavated a recess in the side of it for a garden seat. He used stones from the tulloch for building the garden walls, and mould that had accumulated in the ruins for making up its soil.

The neighbours looked on with grave disapproval and apprehension. It was always believed among them that it was unsafe to meddle with a tulloch. A common opinion was that such structures were utilised by the fairies (sithichean) as residences, and that the fairies resented damage done to them. But whether this view was true or not, it was held to be undoubtedly true that it was not safe or wise to tamper with a tulloch.

Robert, however, proceeded with the work to the finish, heedless of their forebodings and remonstrances.

Shortly after this a plague broke out among the cattle in the district, and they were dying at an alarming rate. There was no doubt in the popular mind as to the cause of the calamity; the question now was as to the means of stopping it.

Wise heads were put together, the seanachies and sages of the place consulted, and ample information was forthcoming as to ancestral customs and practices in similar circumstances. A *Teine-eiginn* was resolved upon as the only means likely to be effectual in stopping the plague.

It required to be raised in a place surrounded by running water, and a small island in the Houstry burn, situated at the foot of a croft called Black Tack, was accordingly selected as the scene of operation.

All the fires in Houstry were extinguished. Wood was carried to the island. Two upright posts were

erected, with a cross-bar connecting them at the top, and a similar one connecting them at the bottom. Another stick was put, standing perpendicularly, within this square frame. The top end of this stick was pressing against the top bar, and the low end rested on the lower bar. Then, by an ingenious arrangement of cords, they were able to make this standing stick to revolve rapidly, first in one direction, then in the opposite direction. Ignition took place at the points of contact.

From the fire thus obtained a large fire producing a great deal of smoke was set up, and the cattle were driven through this smoke three times.

What religious element of a Christian nature entered into this performance I am unable to say, but three fire raisings, indicated by the three burnt holes in the piece of wood, and driving the cattle three times through the smoke, are suggestive of the Trinity. It would be quite in keeping with the practice of the mediæval Church to allow people to retain their pagan customs, but to counteract, as they thought, their pagan influence by attaching a Christian ritual to them.

All the fires in Houstry were rekindled from this fire.

The data enabling me to fix on an approximate date are as follows:—My grandfather, George Sutherland, went to reside in Mulbuie, Houstry, at Whitsunday, 1807. The date of the *Teine-eiginn* was, therefore, not prior to 1807. My aunt, Janet Sutherland, was born in 1803. She had a clear and definite recollection of the extinguishing of the fire in her father's house, and of standing with her bare feet on the hearth from which the fire had been removed. My father, who was born in 1805, had no recollection at all of the event. This narrows the date down to 1808, or, at the latest, to 1809. I think 1810 too late. My father would have been quite old enough to remember what was done at that date.—GEORGE SUTHERLAND, Bruan U.F. Manse, Ulbster, January 14th, 1914.

QUERIES.

Tradition says, during the reign of Charles II., that a Dutch sixty-gun ship wintered in Roeness Voe. England being at war with Holland, the Shetlanders sent an express to the British Government, who dispatched two frigates to Roeness Voe. They there met with the enemy's vessel, and after a severe fight she was captured, a number of the Hollanders being killed, their bodies being buried at a place called the Hollander's Knowe to this day. Can any of your readers give the names of the ships which took part in this engagement?—Northmaven.

ORKNEY SHIPWRECKS.—Boy! his thu any ken about the wreck o' the lint ship at the Riff-o'-Waster (Wasbister), and the wreck of the gin and tea ship at Sackquoy? Both catastrophies occurred on the island of Rousey, during my great-great-grandparents' time. The weed, tea, which is now considered a delicious beverage, was used to make bedding for the cows in the byre at that time! More of this anon.—W. J. INKSTER.

FAYE.—In 1687, Marcus Faye emigrated from Orkney to Bergen, of which he became a citizen. His son, David Marcusson Faye, was a merchant in Bergen, where he died. The descendants of this family now reside in Denmark. The family tradition is that they "came from France, whence on account of the Huguenot persecutions they fled to Scotland, and from there a branch of the family came to Norway." Is there any record of Marcus Faye in Orkney, and was he a member of the family of Fea of Clestrain?—DENMARK.

BARRY.—Who were the parents of the Rev. George Barry, D.D., historian of Orkney? In *Fasti Eccl. Scot.* it is stated that he was born in Berwickshire in 1748, and studied in the University of Edinburgh, from which he had his D.D. in 1804. He was minister

of Kirkwall, 1782-1793, and of Shapinsey, 1793, till his death in 1805. Has any biographical notice of him been written, and is there a portrait of him? There is a place Barrie in Banff, part of the barony of Altrie in 1637. In Forfarshire there is the parish and barony of Barrie or Barry, which occurs as Barry in 1234 (Johnston's *Place-names of Scotland*, s.v.).

In 1617, John Barry inherited a tenement in the burgh of Dundee from his father, William. In 1670, James Barrie inherited a tenement of land in Edinburgh from his father, James, *faber murarius*, burghess of Edinburgh. In 1685, Andrew Barrie, *faber lignarius* in Leith, son of John, merchant, burghess of Edinburgh. In 1659, Margaret and Isabell Barrie were heirs-portioners of their father, William Barrie, in Gottonsyd, in 11½ acres of land of Gottonsyd in the regality of Melrose. In 1872, the only landowner in Forfar of the name was David Barrie, Monifieth.—A. W. JOHNSTON.

REPLIES.

MAGNUS HORRIE, ALGIERS (vii. 11).—Probably a son of Magnus Horrie of Aithsetter, father of Andrew Horrie, writer, Lerwick, and Isabel Horrie, married to Francis Heddell, dyer in Lerwick.—KNAB.

THE FAMILY OF HORRIE IN SHETLAND (p. 11 *ante*).—In reply to Mr. Stuart Bruce's query, I send a few facts relating to the Horrie family. The earliest member, I find, is Magnus Horrie, who is said to have come from Yarmouth to Shetland, though his Christian name would rather indicate a local origin. He acquired a good deal of property about Lerwick, including a house from James Garrioch, weaver, 18 April, 1690; another from William Sinclair of Goat, 24 November, 1693; 3 merks land in Nether Sound and feus in Lerwick from James Greig of Vassay and Agnes Williamson, his wife, 12 August 1695; 5 merks in Ham from Mr. William

Umphray, minister of Walls, 10 June, 1697; the corn tiend of Kebister, 29 October, 1697; 4 merks in Murraysetter and 3 merks land in Quey, in Unst, 29 Oct., 1697; and 3 merks in Railsburg, from Mr. Thomas Umphray, on 29 Oct., 1697; 4 merks in Burriland in Brindister in Gulberwick from Patrick Cheyne of Esslemont, and 7 merks in Over Sound from Patrick Leslie of Ustanes, on 26 June, 1700; 1 merk in North Deal in Unst, and a tenement in Lerwick from Katherine Edie, his wife, on 26 June, 1707; 3 merks in Railsburgh in Nesting from George Cheyne of Esslemont and Barbara Stewart, his spouse, 1st July, 1707, and also houses in Lerwick, in 1709. In these deeds he is designed sometimes *merchant*, and sometimes *litster* or *dyer*. He died before 1723. He married Katherine, eldest daughter to Andrew Edie, eldest son of James Edie, merchant, at Uyeasound, Unst, and Agnes Ross, his wife. She survived him. They had issue (1) Andrew, after mentioned, (2) James, (3) William, (4) John, (5) Elizabeth, (6) Ann, (7) Isabella, married Francis Heddell, dyer, Lerwick. Andrew Horrie, the eldest son, was sometime a merchant and afterwards a writer in Lerwick and sheriff clerk. He disposed of most of the property which his father had acquired, by various deeds, between 1722 and 1739. He married (1) Elizabeth Lamb, and had issue, John, baptised 1739; and (2) 7 January, 1752, Margaret, daughter of James Nicolson of Gilsbreck, and widow of James Dick of Huxter, and had issue (1) Magnus, (2) Elizabeth, (3) Katherine, (4) Ann, (5) Isobel, (6) Agnes.

Magnus, the eldest son, is probably the person Mr. Bruce is anxious to know about.—Rothesay Herald.

In *Orkney and Shetland Records*, I., there is mentioned Gawane Herre (Hurre), of great age, St. Andrews, Orkney, 1519, (p. 63), and the place-name, Hurre or Horrie in St. Andrews, Orkney. This place had been exchanged by John Adamson with Sir David

Sinclair of Sumburgh, for Myn in Burray, Shetland, before 1509, when the exchange was annulled by the court, as the heir of Sir David was unable to "free" Myn (p. 60). John Adamson also appears under the nickname, John Schalte (Shetlander). *Horrie* was undoubtedly the place-surname of this family. In the Shetland rental of 1716, A. Horrie accounts for the skatt of 2 merks land in Sandwick in the scattald of Sandwick in Unst.—A. W. J.

ROITHMEN (p. 3, *ante*).—As the discussion of this word has occupied so many pages of the January number, I hesitate to trespass further upon your valuable space. I should merely like to mention (1) that in the collection of documents for the forthcoming *Records of the Earldom of Orkney* (Scot. Hist. Soc.), I have now found the phrase on seven separate occasions used specifically for *the next of kin* with redemption rights, but *never* for an odaller. "Utheller" or "uthal man" was the term invariably used for him. (2) In an early sixteenth century Orkney inventory, a radman of Bergen is termed a "rothman," and the Rigsraad or King's Council of Norway, is styled the "riggyn royth," showing that these terms were certainly used in Orkney in the sense of council-man and council (as well as in that of kinsman with redemption rights). (3) The 1516 docket (p. 7, last number) has not got the word "present" in it; nor any space for, or other indication of, a missing word; and in point of fact the words "present at that time" are never found as anything that can rightly be described as a "term" for anybody. I have twice found "being present for the time" as part of an ordinary sentence, but that is all. Unless some extremely good reason can be given for arbitrarily altering this very valuable bit of documentary evidence, the docket is proof positive that the roithmen in 1516 were officials of some kind. I may

add that some time ago Professor Taranger assured me that "roithmen and roithmen's sons" was a phrase entirely consistent with the reading "council-man" or "member of court," and its peculiar relevancy to the structure of the Orkney Lawthing will be shown in the above-mentioned *Records*.—J. STORER CLOUSTON.

In regard to the above: (1) the term *roithman*, as I have shown, is certainly only used, so far as we have records, for óðalsmenn having the right to redeem óðul; and as such they and their sons, *roithmen's sons*, together with the landed-óðalsmenn, formed the class from which members of the assize of the lawthing were chosen. (2) It seems reasonable that two identical Norse words should be spelt in the same way at the same time, but that cannot make an Orkney *roithman* a *town-councillor*, the only meaning it has in Norway, where it is solely applied to a member of the town council of Bergen. *Town-councillor* would be altogether inappropriate for a member of the assize of the lawthing of the county of Orkney, and Kirkwall had its own separate town council. (3) The docket is in a *later* hand, bungled, and badly written, and the term *roithmen* does not occur in the text. The docket runs: The dome of the best landitmen *in* [deleted] and royhtmen in Orkna at that *ty* [deleted] tyme.

If the solitary legend of this slovenly docket, of uncertain date, is to be construed as "proof positive that the roithmen in 1516 were officials of some kind," then it is equally "proof positive" that the landedmen were also "officials of some kind," which is absurd. It can only be explained by the assize of "landedmen and roithmen" being described collectively, in their capacity as "doomsmen," as "at that time"; "doomsmen" is their only collective designation in this and other documents, and is obviously, perforce, implied in the docket. If *roithmen* had been intended as a collective official designation for the members of

the assize, there would have been no necessity to add "landedmen." As a matter of fact, they were not all landedmen, so that landedmen + those who had the right to redeem óðul + their sons = the óðal class. The relegation of the lawrightmen (the old designation of the members of the assize) as parish officials, and the more frequent nomination, by the rulers, of members of the assize, possibly one set for each day of, or for each case before, the lawthing, gave the Scottish governors a stronger hold on the local government—it was the policy of the Scottish government to conform local with Scottish institutions; the Orkney *lögrétta* now became a Scottish *assize*. "Present for the time" is the regular term for temporary attendance of unofficial members of a statutory meeting.

In editing the *Records*, I originally came to the conclusion that the term *roithman* = (town) councillor, and added notes to that effect, but I have since, for stated reasons, altered my opinion. The "many pages" of the last number were occupied mainly by a chronological statement of facts which explained themselves, and the little "discussion" merely called attention to that self-evidence. Such an historical synthesis will not be unwelcome to students of old-lore.—A. W. JOHNSTON.

PATRONYMICS (p. 12, *ante*).—A reply by Sir Herbert Maxwell is given, p. 86.

NOTES FROM THE TONGUE PRESBYTERY RECORDS.

II.

(Continued from p. 48, *ante*).

8th June, 1731.—At Tongue. George MacKay, student in philosophy, appointed to the parochial school set up in Tongue at a salary of 200 merks besides the

session emoluments. John MacDonal'd appointed to the Society School in Knockbreck, Durness.

Mr. Robertson, minister of Farr, by order of the Assembly, is to be transported to the parish of Kiltearn.

13th August, 1731. At Durness. Examination of church, manse, and glebe; present:—William MacKay, joiner, Falasaide; James Hossag, grievie to the Rt. Hon. Lord Reay; John MacKay, chamberlain, Clashneach.

12th October, 1731.—At Tongue. Messrs. Brodie and Murdoch Macdonald appointed to supply at Farr and Keankyle (Strathnaver) respectively on the Sabbath before the next meeting of Presbytery.

“The Presbytery finding that William Maconil, an adulterer in the parish of Farr did stand in sackcloth in the several parishes of this country according to appointment and that he is desirous to be dismissed from any further public appearance but considering the heinousness of his crime have appointed that he continue to stand before the several ministers who shall supply at Farr till next Presbytery and give the said William suitable admonitions towards deep humiliation and sincere repentance.”

13th October, 1731. At Farr. At an examination of the manse it is described as having a “Highland roof thatched with divats.”

1st March, 1732.—At Tongue. The elder from Farr was Robert MacKay in Coirfuran. In reply to the Synod's enquiry “the Presbytery find no sturdy beggars in their bounds and take always care that servants are clothed with proper testimonials.”

At this meeting it is reported that there are yet no elders in Assynt and that Mr. Scobie is much hindered in his work by the opposition of the people.

[*2nd March, 1732.*—John MacKay, catechist in Assynt is transferred to Farr.

13th April, 1732.—Mr. John Munro appointed by Commission to enter on his trials before the Presbytery of Tongue for licence.

21st June, 1732.—John MacKay of Melness in sederunt as representative elder from kirk-session of Tongue.]

29th August, 1732.—At Skelpick. It appears that the previous day a call signed by the heritors and a majority of elders, Lord Strathnaver being present, on behalf of Mr. Skeldoch was given. Some of the elders who signed made a provision "that he should be cleared of some aspersions cast upon him by common fame" before the call should be put into his hands. Strathnaver vindicates him and promises to do so further. The Presbytery delay sustaining the call until Mr. Skeldoch get a proper testimonial from his own Presbytery. This is the beginning of one of the most prolonged and troublesome cases with which the northern church courts had ever to deal.¹

A Durness man charged with adultery, and is such a bad character that he has for several other crimes been threatened with banishment to the plantations. Mac-Hormad is a habitual sinner having been a quadralapse in fornication before Mr MacDonald came to Durness;

¹ Mr. Skeldoch it would appear, had a good deal of trouble in Kilmonivaig before his translation to the parish of Farr as the following extract shows:—"The former possessor lay still 'til the minister had plentifully stocked the farm with cattle, and built a house on it, then with some other rogues (finding that the cattle were carefully watched) went to the place where the calves were kept, and with their durks cut off their heads and cut the skins so that they could not be of any use, then laid them in two separate heaps. That same night they cut and destroyed the nets and utensils of the salmon fishery on the River Lochy belonging to the Duke of Gordon. But finding that this did not force the minister to leave the place, they waited an opportunity of his being from home when a company of them well-armed, surrounded his house, pulled down a part of it, and fired several shots towards the bed where his wife lay, which at last obliged the minister to retire with his family to Fort William."—*The Highlands of Scotland in 1750*, pp. 92, 93.

the Presbytery are of opinion that he is worthy of the highest censure of the church but delay for further information.

The only "legal school" yet in the Presbytery is at Tongue.

28th September, 1732.—A testimonial is handed into the Presbytery on behalf of Mr. Skeldoch. At the same time a petition signed by several heads of families in parish of Farr opposed to the settlement is also handed in. The two serious objections to Mr. Skeldoch mentioned in the petition were:—"that upon a Sabbath after he had preached at Keankyle he had a long conversation upon the method of improving land and grass in the Highlands and concerning the manly feats of some Highlanders in his own country; and that his conversation continued from two o'clock in the afternoon till sunset in a June day; moreover, that on a certain morning when a refreshment was presented in a private family in company he did not ask a blessing to it tho' desired but would have everybody seek a blessing to himself." The Presbytery "suspended concurrence to the call."

16th November, 1732.—At Tongue. Mr. Skeldoch intimates that he does not wish to accept the call unless three-fourths of the people approve of him. The mind of the people is to be discovered by the people gathering in public meeting, without speaking, those favourable to Mr. Skeldoch going out to one hill and those unfavourable to another hill as directed by the Moderator. This was Mr. Skeldoch's own proposal, and was accepted by the Presbytery.

11th December, 1732.—Mr. Scobie absent on account of his father-in-law's death.

There was a great gathering of the heads of families about the kirk to carry out the arrangement proposed by Mr. Skeldoch. The Moderator "assigned different places to the differing parties in the open field

the said people all present, who were above two-thirds of the parish, unanimously declared against him.”

The Presbytery decide that by his own showing Mr. Skeldoch should have nothing more to do with the call from Farr. A letter was read from Lord Strathnaver in which he expressed his determination to go on with the call notwithstanding the objections of the people. The Presbytery advise Lord Strathnaver and the Presbytery of Abertarrf of the folly of prosecuting this call any further.

13th December, 1732.—At Tongue. Hugh MacHormat in Durness who deserves excommunication is still at large but the Presbytery order that in consequence of his many sins of uncleanness that he be excommunicated by Mr. MacDonald from Durness pulpit, and that this sentence be read from every pulpit in the Presbytery.

16th May, 1733.—At Tongue. A letter read from Mr. Skeldoch in which he blames the Presbytery for the opposition to him and holds himself ready to accept the call whether they concur in it or not. The Presbytery refer the case to the Synod as they do not know whether Mr. Skeldoch is coming or what they are to do. They also write the Presbytery of Abertarrf drawing attention to certain false charges made against them by Mr. Skeldoch.

Donald MacKay, formerly catechist, appointed schoolmaster of Durness; John Happy, son of Donald Happy, catechist of Tongue, appointed schoolmaster of Eddrachillis.

[*29th June, 1733.*—At Dornoch. A petition was presented to this Synod by John Sutherland of Forse, Alexander Ross of Easter-Fearn, Robert McAllaster, factor to Lord Strathnaver, and Rev. James Gilchrist, Loth, commissioners appointed by the heritors and elders of the parish of Farr to prosecute the call given

to Mr. John Skeldoch, minister of the gospel in the Presbytery of Abertarrf because the Presbytery of Tongue refused to appoint a day within a reasonable time for admitting the said Mr. John Skeldoch. The Synod called the Presbytery before them and asked their reasons for so acting. After much debate the Synod decided to appoint a committee who in conjunction with the Presbytery of Tongue might admit Mr. Skeldoch to his charge and failing the Tongue Presbytery the Committee were to proceed to the admission themselves. The committee consisted of Messrs. John Monro, Halkirk; Hugh Corse, Bower; John Sinclair, Watten; James Gilchrist, Loth; and Alexander Fraser of Pitcalean, ruling elder. The Presbytery appealed to the Assembly against this decision].

12th December, 1733.—At Tongue. The Presbytery agree to prosecute their appeal *re* the Farr call before the Assembly providing the parish of Farr raise £10 towards the necessary expence; the money to be raised before 1st of March ensuing.

£1500 sterling of the collection made for the churches in Strathnaver invested in landed property in the neighbourhood; Lord Reay overspent £1282 - 3 - 2 Scots and does not demand the same to be refunded.

When the Presbytery are in any difficulty they resolve to consult Lord Reay “and that this conference with his Lordship shall be before they leave this place.”

William Henderson, probationer, was at this time itinerant preacher in Farr under the Royal Bounty.

The Synod instructed the Presbytery that His Majesty's Proclamations be duly read from the pulpits. The Presbytery agree to this. The Synod further instruct the Presbytery “that no regard be had to vagrant sturdy beggars coming from other places except they be recommended by the Assembly; that no minister grant a certificate to any person to beg without the bounty of his own parish and that said Presbytery

apply to the sheriff that he may appoint constables or any other proper officers to restrain such idle and troublesome persons."

Synod appoints Mr. Scobie to serve the edict at Farr should the Presbytery drop the appeal; Mr. Scobie was the only one of the Presbytery in favour of the call.

6th March, 1734.—It was reported by Mr. Brodie that the Farr people refused to raise the money required for prosecuting the appeal before the Assembly; but the Presbytery did not think that Mr. Brodie put the matter before them properly as he only consulted a few privately while he was instructed to make public intimation from the pulpit. The Presbytery delay consideration of prosecution of appeal meantime.

William MacKay, catechist, Farr, is reported to have died.

28th August, 1734.—At Tongue. It is stated that Mr. Skeldoch had been admitted at Farr in July last. [At a meeting of Synod held in 1734 the Synod's Committee already referred to reported that they had in conjunction with Mr. Scobie, Assynt, admitted Mr. Skeldoch, minister of Farr on the 18th July, 1734.]

In a report of excommunicated persons from the Synod appears the name of "Margaret MacKay, in the parish of Creich for charming and contumacy."

31st October, 1734.—Mr. Scobie's absence from two meetings without excuse to be inquired into.

The Committee for the Reformation of the Highlands allowed John MacDonald to be continued catechist and schoolmaster in Knockbreck.

Robert MacKay in G nubeg (Grumbeg) appointed joint-schoolmaster and catechist in parish of Farr in place of William MacKay deceased at a salary of £7.

Mr. William Henderson itinerant preacher in the parish of Farr has a salary of £20. He is asked to go all over the Presbytery giving four Sabbaths to each parish at a time.

17th April, 1735.—Presbytery refuse to put Mr. Skeldoch's name on the roll and speak very strongly against Mr. Scobie for the part he took in the matter. At the induction there were evidently wild scenes on the part of the people which are referred to in the Presbytery minutes.

[26th June, 1735.—At Dornoch. At this meeting of Synod Mr. Scobie petitioned that his parish be disjoined from the Presbytery of Tongue and joined to Dornoch because of the distance of the Presbytery seat "so that his own person is much debilitate by long and tedious journeys thro almost a desolate wilderness and that often on his way to or from his Presbytery he is locked up twixt impassable rivers without the common necessaries." The Synod agreed to support the petition which was sent to the Assembly.]

9th August, 1736.—At Badcall. Mr. Skeldoch's name not yet put on roll. To-day he offers to sign a paper satisfying the Presbytery as to his statement that he would not be minister of Farr if a fourth of the people were against him. Mr. Brodie, however, says that the Presbytery must hear what the people have to say. An opportunity is to be given them at next meeting.

1st September, 1736.—At Farr. Mr. Skeldoch's accusers called. John Grey in Langwell states that he was told by another man that Mr. Skeldoch preached that there was no pardon for a thief unless he restored fourfold.

FOOD OF THE SHETLANDERS LANGSYNE.

BY JESSIE M. E. SAXBY.

“Da pukkle, an da coo, an da stablin white fish,
What better could wir Mate-midder finnd fur her dish.”

THE English of that rhyme would be that out of corn, milk, beef and fish the housekeeper can evolve all food needful for our sustenance.

“Flesh-food” had a very small part in the daily food of our Isle’s-folk, but they contrived to set on their tables a wonderful variety of “made-dishes” composed of meal, or milk, or fish disguised beyond recognition. Here are some of these.

Strubba, coagulated milk whipt to the consistency of cream.

Klokks, new milk simmered until it becomes clotted and yellowish-brown. It is flavoured with cinnamon and sugar.

Mill-gruel, porridge made with milk instead of water.

Kirn mill, curd of buttermilk carefully strained till almost dry. Giola, curd of buttermilk only partially separated from the whey.

Blaund, whey of buttermilk. The whey is allowed to reach the fermenting, sparkling stage. Beyond that it becomes flat and vinigary. “Soor blaund” is a delicious and quenching drink, and used to be in every cottage for common use. It is what fashionable doctors recommend for consumptives under the name of the “sour whey cure.” Some years ago *Chambers’s Journal* told us that the milk of mares is prepared in this identical way at the famous Russian Sanitoriums, and given to the patients in large quantities, with much success.

Bleddik, the old local name for buttermilk.

Hungmill, coagulated cream hung in a close bag till the whey is drained away, and the residue tastes exactly like cream-cheese. Indeed it is said that cream-cheese

is made from what English people call "gone" milk subjected to pressure.

Klabba is "junket." In our dialect we call it "yearned" milk, that is, milk set thick by the action of "yearnin" (rennet) or butterwort. That lovely little plant is still used in Norway for this purpose.

Eusteen, hot milk separated by the addition of sherry or any acid "comforting" liquid which will reduce the milk to curd and whey. Sometimes eusteen is made from merely sour milk.

Pramm, cold milk into which has been stirred a small quantity of meal, a ready dish to set before a hungry bairn, or beggar.

Run-mill, is milk gone thick. In this state milk is preferred in Scandinavia and in South Africa; indeed it is said that milk is more "safe" to take in that state than when fresh in a hot climate.

Eggaloorie, is salt, eggs and milk boiled together. This dish was given to the neighbour-wives who waited on a mother to congratulate her on a baby's arrival. It seems to have been the substitute for caudle.

"Da Pukkle" is a homely way of referring to the precious grain which is often a very uncertain crop in the Isles. The oats, which is known as "Shetland aits," is a hard, dark-coloured pukkle, vigorous in growth, but not full in the ear. When this corn was dried and ground on a hand-mill it was called *bursteen*. It is a rich brown in hue, highly flavoured, and fine as dust. It is made into round cakes, often enriched by butter, and slowly baked over the fire. These cakes are called "bursteen brünies." When a hungry boy has come in clamouring for his "twaloor," the bursteen was hastily kneaded into a thick cake and well spread with butter. It was then termed a "clined krül." Pram is often made with bursteen instead of common oatmeal.

Virpa, is sowans, so well known to Scottish folk.

It will be remembered that a canny Scot taught the starving defenders of Mafeking how to prepare this dish, but so long had it been a lost dish to Britons that it was heard of with surprise, and even doubt at the time of the Boer War. People thought it could not be possible that men could find any sustenance in the husks of corn. Perhaps it may be of use to tell how the *virpa* is made. The husks are steeped in water till a fermented liquor comes atop. By that time the husk has parted from a good quantity of mealy substance. This is strained off. Then a portion of the clear "swatts" (the fermented water) is added till the mixture is as thick as cream. The stuff is well boiled; and many invalids who find ordinary milk porridge too strong for a weak digestion can eat *virpa* with relish and benefit.

Bear-meal was extensively used for porridge and bannocks and is still much valued in certain districts where "baker's bread" has not reached in sufficient quantity to teach the housewife to depend upon other hands than her own for the bread supply.

K'nockit corn (groats) was boiled with kail and a morsel of pork as "keetchin" (relish). There is an old fiddle tune called "Kail an K'nockit corn." When saying the word you must give full effect to the K, sending it through the nose with emphasis.

Brides-bonn (brides's cake) was made from flour with butter, carraway seeds and, if possible, sugar. It was broken over the bride's head as she stood on the threshold, on her return from the kirk.

Yule-brünies were composed of rye meal and a fat of some sort. They were formed round, and the edges pinched out to represent the sun-rays. Every member of a household was entitled to a Yule-brünie.

Ploy-skonn was like Scottish shortbread without sugar. Men were never supposed to share in this, which was eaten at a twelve o'clock a.m. tea-party, held in seclusion and consisting of elderly women only.

Tautie-bannocks were composed of mashed potatoes mixed with flour and milk, and baked on the hearth. When the potato crop turned out diseased the potatoes were ground, reduced to pulp, carefully washed and dried, when a fine starchy flour was the result. This was made into pancakes, or boiled with milk as arrowroot is used. It tastes exactly like arrowroot, and might well be used instead.

In old times the only marketable fish sent from Shetland were cod, ling, torske, and saithe (always excepting herring). There was no means of conveying the fish fresh to market, so all had to be salted and dried. When the boats came in from the haaf they left those fish at the curing stations, minus head, roe, liver, soond, and muggie. Skate, halibut, turbot, flounder, mackerel, crab, or other sea creatures, were also the fishermen's perquisites. Skate were usually salted and dried for winter use. Other fish were either used at once or partially "blaun,"—that is, slightly salted and hung in the wind till it acquired a peculiar taste.

Hoe, dogfish (the fisherman's ban), was often salted and smoked and used as "keetchin wi' tauties."

The muggie (stomach) was cleaned out and half-filled with liver and oatmeal well mixed together and flavoured with pepper and salt. This was called "krappin muggies." Other livers were also prepared with meal and seasoning, and boiled in the mouth of the fish-head. This was called "krappin heads."

Slott was fish roe beat with a spoon till it was like cream, a little flour with salt was added, and the slott, roughly shaped into balls, was dropped into hot water and boiled a short time. When cool it was sliced, fried in butter, and eaten hot.

Stapp is the meat of fish heads with the liver, after having been boiled carefully, mixed with seasoning, baked, and served hot.

Krampies are piltacks (small coal-fish) "cleaned" and the liver enclosed with wooden pins where the

“innards” were. The fish is then roasted and served as hot as possible.

Saide-an-gree was the saith (coal-fish) boiled with its liver till the oil floated on the water. When the fish was dished the “gree” was skimmed off and poured over the fish.

Kiossed heeds were fish heads or small fish rolled in a cloth and put into a crevice of a stone wall till they acquired a gamey flavour. They were then cooked and eaten with butter and potatoes.

An Englishman makes a grimace when he hears of gamey fish and “turned” milk, but one fails to see why he revolts from these when he partakes of mited cheese and rotten grouse.

Shetlanders preferred both fish, flesh and fowl “reested” (smoked and dried) rather than pickled, and you would see the reest of a well-to-do fisherman garnished by “tees” of mutton, “pensch” puddings, geese and “baunds o’ piltacks” or sillock, with other sorts of fish. There was no consumption in Shetland when the diet of the people chiefly consisted of such dishes as I have here mentioned.

Sometimes a toon of three or four families could afford to have a mert (fatted cow) about Hallowmas. “Da brakkin down o’ da mert” was a most important event, and everybody lent a hand to reduce poor “Kutsie” to bits. No morsel was considered unfit for food, and every bit of the beast had a name, though the entrails and suet, head and feet, were known as the faa. It makes one almost sick to recall the names of dishes,—puddings, sausages, etc., of various shapes and contents, evolved from the corpse of a cow. But those weird concoctions were tasty and nourishing when one learned to forget that they had once been portions of the gentle-eyed Kutsie, who had been about the house for years, and whose sweet milk had been keenly appreciated!

This reminds me to make special mention of one right

royal dish which appeared at Yule, and at no other time. This was "Whipkull." It is composed of yolk of egg beaten with pounded sugar till both are as one. Then thick sweet cream is slowly poured and stirred in. Last of all a generous amount of "some potent spirit" is added. After the whipkull has stood a short time till its delightful ingredients have become thoroughly blended it is ladled into goodly-sized glasses and handed round. In modern times we used rum for the whipkull, which would be the nearest substitute obtainable for mead, which I take for granted was the intoxicant in vogue langsyne.

This must have been the glorious drink of which the Vikings took before launching on the deep, bound on some wild raid, or when they came back with spoil and fame.

I think it was whipkull which Brynhild presented in the golden cup to Sigurd when he woke her from her magic sleep.

P.S.—I was indebted to the late Andrew Anderson, of Greenside, for some of the details, here given, regarding a few very ancient dishes.—J. M. E. S.

GLOSSARY OF SOME WORDS COMPILED BY
A. W. JOHNSTON.

* not found in any other glossary.
Ed., Edmondston's *Glossary*.
E.D.D., *English Dialect Dictionary*.
J.J., Dr. Jakob Jakobsen's works.
OX.D., *Icelandic-English Dictionary*.
Frit., Fritzner's *Ordbog*.
J.S., Dr. Jón Stefánsson.

baunds (of piltacks). E.D.D., two things, or brace, also applied to a number of things fixed on a string; deriv. from Fr. *bande*, from It. *bánda*, a troop of men.

blaund, whey of buttermilk. OX.D., *blanda*, to mix, *blanda*, any mixture of two fluids, but esp. a beverage of whey mixed up with water.

bleddik, old name for buttermilk. Orkney, *blatho*; Gaelic, *blàthach*.

eggaloorie, eggs and milk boiled together. Can this be **egg-galoor* (ie, Sco. *galooe*, *galore*?) J.S., Isl., **eggja-glóra*, a glint of eggs.

- eusteen.** Ed., *ustin*, a preparation of sweet milk, in which the curd is separated from the whey without the use of rennet. OX.D., *ystingr*, curdled milk, *ysta*, to curdle, *ysta mjólk*, to curdle milk in making cheese, *ostr*, or *skyr*, curdled milk.
- faa**, entrails. E.D.D., only used in Shetland. OX.D., *inn-yfli*, spelt *innylfi*, entrails, bowels; *yfa*, to open, rip up; *leifar*, pl. offal, remnants. Can it be a corruption Eng. *fall*, Sco. *faa*; or *offal*, as applied to the "off fall" or refuse of slaughtered animals. J.S., Isl., *fall*, carcase and esp. the entrails of sheep.
- giola**, curd of buttermilk. J.J., *cf.* Norse, *kjore*, ill-curdled milk. [The other *Gjola*, a nick-name for a tall, thin, pale, sickly woman, J.J. thinks is connected with *gjomet*, thin, pale and sickly; but may it not be Gaelic, *giulla*, a lad, boy (from *gille*), Ir. *giolla*, a servant? J.S., O.N., *gelgja*, a lean, haggard woman.]
- hoe**, dogfish. O.N., *hár*, Isl., *háfr*.
- keetchin**, relish. E.D.D., Sco., Eng., Irel., *kitchen*, (2) anything extra as a relish with bread, potatoes, or other plain fare, (4) to season, to give a relish to, etc.
- kiossed heeds**, fish heads placed in crevice of a stone wall till they became gamey. Ed. *keuss*. OX.D., *kasa*, to heap earth or stones on witches, carcasses of beasts, etc., to pile in heaps, esp. of blubber of whales; *kös*, a pile, heap of stones, blubber, etc. J.S., O.N., *kasa*, to bury fish in the ground until gamey, *kæstr*, pp., used esp. of shark and skate.
- klabba**, junket. E.D.D., Irel., Munster, *clabber*, sour milk when it has grown thick and flaky; Sco., Irel., Cumberland, for soft, sticky mud, mire. Gael., *clàbar*, mire, clay.
- klokks**, clotted new milk. J.J., *kloks*, a kind of milk pottage, Unst? **klaks(a)* or *kluks(a)*, a soft or thick mass; also *glaks*, *gluks*, a thick mass, *cf.* Norse *kleksa* = *klessa*, soft mass, a clot. *Cf.* Gaelic, *glog*, a soft lump.
- krappin muggies**, liver and oatmeal cooked in stomach of fish. J.J., *kroppin*, *krappin*, *krampi* (*mþ* > *þþ*), Norse, *krampa*, to press; *cf.* Sco. "creppit heads," stuffed heads of haddocks. J.S., O.N., *kroppr*, a hump, bunch, crop.
- mate-mither**. E.D.D., the person who serves out food to others, the mistress of the house, quoting Spence's *Folklore*. OX.D., O.N., *matmóðir*, *meat-mother*, used of a *mistress* with respect to her servants and household. DN. I, No. 777, *matmodher* used in Norway in 1441, for mistress of a house, Norse, *madmoder*, *do.* (Frit.).
- mert**, a fattened cow. E.D.D., Sco., Eng., Ork., Shet., *mart*, a cow or ox fattened to be killed and salted or smoked for winter provision; any meat pickled and stored for winter; Gael., *mart*, a cow.
- muggie**, stomach (of fish). E.D.D., Shetland, *muggie*, *moggie*, stomach of fish. OX.D., *magi*, a maw, stomach.
- pensch**. E.D.D., Sco., *paunchings*, Ork. and Shet., *penshens*, tripe, Sco., Eng., *paunch*, *pench*, tripe, guts.
- ***ploy scone**. E.D.D., *ploy*, amusement, merrymaking, etc., a shortened form of *employ*.

- pramm**, meal stirred into milk. J.J., Orkney, *brammo*, water and meal, etymology uncertain, probably connected with Norse *brim*, *prim*, (a) sediment (b) soft cheese of whey. But *cf.* Sco., *prann*, *pron*, to bruise, also coarsely ground oatmeal and any flummery made from such oatmeal; Caithness, *pron*, the bran of oatmeal, of which sowens is made; *cf.* Gaelic, *pronn*, to pound, bray, mash; see E.D.D., *s.v.*, *pram*, *prann*, *brammo*. Shetland *pramm* appears to be from Gaelic, *pronn*, hence Caithness, *pron*, Sco., *prann*; also Ork. *brammo*, unless it is from Gaelic *brama*, flatulence, a possible result of taking oatmeal and water! *cf.* Latin *polentarius* (1) pearl barley (2) crepitus caused by eating barley.
- pukkle**, Eng., Sco., Irel., *pickle*, *puckle*, a grain or kernel of corn, a small quantity. J.J. suggests that it may be O.N. **pökkull*, dimin. of *pakki*, a pack or bundle (of wadmel), in the same way as Icel. *böggull*, is a dimin. of *baggi*, a bag. *Cf.* the proverb: many a puckle (or pickle) makes a muckle (or mickle), which is frequently misquoted: many a mickle makes a muckle!
- reest**, to smoke. E.D.D., Eng., Sco., to smoke. OX.D., *hanga*, to hang up for smoking, *hanginn*, hung, smoked, *hangid kjöt*, smoked meat.
- reest**, E.D.D., Eng., Sco., Ork. and Shet., *reest*, *roost* (2) the inner roof of a cottage, the upper part of a cow-house, a loft over a stable, a garret.
- saide-an-gree**, coal-fish boiled with its liver till the grease, *gree*, floated on the water. O.N., *seiðr*, coal-fish, Sco., *gree*, oil, see E.D.D.
- slott**, fish roe beat into a cream. Ed., fish liver and roe mixed with meal. OX.D., *slóg*, the eatable inwards (liver, etc.) of a fish. J.S., O.N., *slægt*, p.p. of *slægja*, to clean out fish.
- soond** (of fish). E.D.D., Eng., Sco., *sound*, the swimming bladder of fish. OX.D., *sund-magi*, "swim-maw," the bladder of a fish.
- stablin white fish**. Ed., *stab*, a stool, *stablin*, half-grown, stout for one's age, *stablin-cod*, a thick, fat cod-fish. J.J., *stablin cod*, a half-grown cod, also called in Yell and Lunnasting, a *stab* [O.N., *stabbi*, stub, stump]; *stablin* probably **stabblingr*; a *stivalen* cod [**stýflingr*] = a *stablin* cod; a *nodi* (Yell) = *stablin*, *cf.* Nor. *nudden*, docked, *nydden*, plump, round; in Dunrosnes for *stablin* is used, *lobbin*, a l. cod, Norse, *lubb*, a round object, *lubbetorsk*.
- stapp**, fish pudding. OX.D., *stappa*, to bray in a mortar. J.S., Isl. *stappa*, n. a pudding of fish and potatoes.
- strubba**, coagulated milk. J.J., *stroba*, half-curdled milk, also = Isl. and Fær. *stropi*, curdled yoke and white of egg. OX.D., *stropa*, to be not quite fresh, of an egg; an egg is first *glæ-nýtt*, clear, opp. to clouded, then *stropað*, half-hatched, and lastly *ungað*, hatched.
- tee**. Ed., a thigh. OX.D., O.N., *þjó*, n. thigh.
- virpa**, sowans. Ed., a thin kind of sowens. From O.N., *verpill*, a cask, barrel, in which the sowens is prepared? J.S., Isl., *vilpa*, f. clotted sediment.
- ***whipkull**, egg whipped with rum. *Cf.* Gaelic, *cuipe-gheal*, foamy, *cuipe* = whip. J.S., Isl., *kolla*, a cup without handle or feet, Eng., *whip*, hence **whip-kolla*, whip-cup.

NOTES ON THE INTRODUCTION TO
ORKNEY AND SHETLAND RECORDS,
VOL. I.

WE are much indebted to Mr. A. W. Johnston for his very valuable and interesting Introduction to Vol. I. of *Orkney and Shetland Records*. It is refreshing to have so much that is scientific, and based on documentary evidence, instead of largely on hearsay and supposition, as has so often been the case. Regarding the Picts, it now seems to have been pretty well proved they were Celtic linguistically, and spoke a dialect of the Old Welsh, as Mr. Johnston says. It also seems certain they came into Orkney and Shetland from the south, and were in occupation of the islands for several centuries before the coming of the Norsemen. They never extended to Faroe and Iceland, although some of the Irish monks who had christianised them lived as hermits there. Whether the Picts were the first inhabitants of Orkney and Shetland is still uncertain. Possibly a more primitive people of the so-called Iberian stock had preceded them, and there appears to be a possibility of them in turn having been preceded by a race of Finn relationship. In this event the Pictish inhabitants would not be of pure Celtic blood. They would be of two or more physical types. Besides, is there such a thing as a definite Celtic type? People may be linguistically of one race, and physically of another. Professor Rhys considers the Picts to have been very largely of non-Celtic blood and even language (*cf.* Rhys, *Celtic Britain*, 1908), whilst Dr. Deniker says there is no "Celtic" type or race (so far as physical characteristics are concerned), the people speaking Celtic tongues being of a number of diverse types (*cf.* Deniker, *The Races of Man*, 1900). I do not think it possible that the Picts were exterminated by the invading Norsemen, as tradition relates. History

shows that almost invariably a portion of the conquered race is absorbed by the conquerors, or at least allowed to remain in a subjected state. No doubt a number of the first Vikings would take wives from among the Picts, and most, if not all, of the latter remaining in the islands, would be made thralls by the Norsemen, as Mr. Johnston suggests. However, it seems to me that the settlement of the Vikings in the islands, during the seventh and eighth centuries, would not be altogether peaceful, nor would a great many of the Picts remain when they had a chance to leave.¹ A people of the culture and supposed spirit of the Picts would not readily consent or submit to the loss of all their lands, and the reduction of themselves to a state of thralldom. Besides there would be the antagonism of religions. It seems likely that when the Picts realised that they could not hold their own against the ever-increasing number of invaders, large bodies of them would migrate to Scotland, where their lives would be more secure, and they would be among their congeners in race, language, and religion. A few, who had managed to make friends with or had intermarried with the invaders, would probably remain. Of course, this is assuming that the Picts were the only race in the islands; but if they were merely a ruling class there, that had not assimilated lower classes of non-Pictish origin, then there is a possibility of a considerable number of this non-Pictish element having remained in the islands. To them Norse rule might seem no worse than Pictish rule, and probably they had no haven of refuge they could seek, where they would be better than where they were. The degree of purity of the Norse race now existing in the islands depends very largely on the number of aborigines (Picts or others) that remained in the islands in the first place, and secondly on the amount of immigration into the

¹The monks who were settled in Faroe and Iceland appear to have left on the first appearance of the Norsemen there.

islands (mostly of Scots) during the Scottish period. Both would tend to make blends with the Norse race. The second influence has no doubt affected Orkney much more than Shetland, where it appears to have been almost nil until the latter part of the sixteenth century. Since then the number of immigrants that has actually settled and mixed with the people is small, and in most cases can be easily traced. They would be absorbed by the preponderating Norse element, and could only to a very slight extent (if at all) have affected the blood or prevailing physical types of the people. I believe thus, that so far as Shetland is concerned, whatever modifications of Norse types may be apparent, are attributable almost entirely to the first influence, viz., intermixture with pre-Norse elements. The occasional intermarriage of Vikings with women of countries which they raided, or in which they had lived for a time (Scotch, Irish, Welsh, Angle, Saxon, etc.) also requires little consideration, except it can be proved to have been very general. This influence (if to be considered) probably would affect Orkney most, and Shetland, Faroe, Iceland and Norway only slightly. The settlement of shipwrecked Spaniards of the Armada may be neglected, as the same appears to be based entirely on supposition. Although I have seen a few Shetlanders who apparently do not conform to any Norse types I am acquainted with, and some others who only partially conform thereto, still, I think on the whole the present population of Shetland (I do not know enough about Orkney to speak) has the appearance of being characteristically Norse. Individuals of Norse types are very abundant. Some Shetlanders and Norwegians are so much alike that I have known or heard of several cases of Norwegians mistaking Shetlanders for persons they had known in Norway, and *vice versa*. The predominance of Norse types at the present day would show that the number of pre-Norse inhabitants

absorbed by the Norse settlers was not great. Therefore, most of the former inhabitants probably left the islands on the arrival of the vikings. I do not agree altogether with Mr. Johnston's inference, that being brown-haired is indicative that a person is not pure Scandinavian. People with brown or medium shades of hair are quite common in Norway, and real dark hair also occurs. A late Norwegian neighbour of mine was fully six feet tall, of rather heavy build, had very dark hair of the kind usually called black, dark brown eyes, a rounded face, with rather short aquiline nose. He resembled some men I have seen in Shetland. The Norwegians who came as settlers to Orkney and Shetland would not all have been of the flaxen-haired type. Naturally, they would represent the various types to be found in the districts of Norway from whence they came, and this must be taken into account when considering the types of the people of Orkney and Shetland. According to Deniker's map of the races of Europe (*ibid.*, p. 327), the Norwegian people are composed of four races (one primary and three secondary). Moreover, the most mixed population is along the west coast, where most of the settlers in Orkney and Shetland are supposed to have come from. Then there is the possibility of a slight Finnish element in the islands, which may have been introduced with the Norse colonists, if it did not already exist there. Several observers have noticed an apparent affinity to Finnish types among Shetlanders (*cf.* Annandale, *The Faroes and Iceland*, 1905, and Dr. Beddoe, quoted therein). No doubt a thorough anthropological survey of the islands would, in a great measure, settle these points, and show the affinities of the physical types of the islanders. As yet I believe very little has been done in this respect. All I have heard of are a few measurements of men made by Captain Thomas and some others, taken of islanders resident in English and Scot-

tish cities by the Anthropological Society of Great Britain. So far as they go, I understand these measurements show the people to be of the prevailing Scandinavian types. So far as stature is concerned, the average height of Shetland men can be ascertained correctly from the measurements of the several thousand men who have passed through the Royal Naval Reserve. However, some allowance must be made in the second-class men, some of whom were not adults when measured. Extensive studies have been made in the physical anthropology of the people of Faroe (especially the south islands), some 2,000 or more of whom have been measured. Although long-headed and short-headed persons are found, and both light and dark hair and eyes occur, the conclusion is that the Faroe people are thoroughly Scandinavian, differing in no way from the types found in Norway and Denmark. The population is stated to be completely homogeneous, without any trace of foreign races (*cf.* Dr. Hansen, on the Physical Anthropology of the Faroe Islanders, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. XLII., 1912). This is as might be expected, considering the history of the country, there having been no pre-Norse inhabitants for the colonists to mix with (the Irish or Scotch monks having left the islands in fear of the vikings), and practically no immigration of aliens into the islands since the time of their settlement by the Norsemen. Regarding the survival of the Old Norse or Norn dialect, if some of the old people are to be believed, the tongue lingered in certain corners of Shetland to at least past the beginning of the nineteenth century, when it was still used by a very few of the oldest people of particular families in speaking among themselves. It may have been (and little doubt was) a corrupt dialect at that time, but certainly the language used was not English, nor Scottish, nor could it have borne any great resemblance to the present Shetland

dialect, else it would have been intelligible to the people who heard it, whereas it is related that only a few words could be understood. In again extending thanks to Mr. Johnston for his valuable article, I think our thanks are also due to Dr. Jakobsen for his scholarly researches into the old language and place-names of the islands, which have resulted already in the throwing of so much light on the early history of the islands.

J. A. T.

NOTE.—In the introduction to the *Orkneyinga Saga* (x., xi.) it is stated that Bruide MacBile, King of the Northern Picts, laid waste the Orkneys in 682. Would this expedition have been against the vikings, who, according to Mr. Johnston's article, commenced to settle in Orkney circa 664 (which date, as Mr. Johnston proves, must be approximately correct). There are also mentioned, by the Editor of the *Orkneyinga Saga*, a notice of an expedition of the Dalriadic Scots against Orkney in 580, and a statement from Nennius that two Saxon chiefs with forty keels laid waste Orkney in 449. Probably much dependence cannot be placed on these records, as Nennius states that the Picts were still in possession of the islands in his day (supposed to be circa 858) which cannot have been so.

J. A. T.

NOTE.—The first instalment of a paper by Mr. Johnston in support of his conclusions in the *Introduction*, is given in this number. Shetlanders of the Royal Naval Reserve would presumably be of the Scandinavian or seafaring type, and not typical of Shetlandmen as a whole, the Celtic race being distinctly non-seafaring. An anthropological survey should discriminate between the vocations and locations of the people, the seafaring class being presumably Norse, and the inland farmers Celtic or non-Norse. This is in accordance with Mr. Johnston's observations, and equally applies to recent Celtic immigrants.

EDITOR.

ORKNEY AND SHETLAND FOLK, 872—1350.

BY A. W. JOHNSTON.

I.

THIS paper is an attempt to describe the mixed races which inhabited Orkney and Shetland from the foundation of the Norse earldom, in 872, until the end of the rule of the Gaelic earls, *circa*, 1350, and it is a first instalment of the evidence on which a paragraph on "person-names" was founded, in the *Introduction to Orkney and Shetland Records*, vol. I.

The earliest inhabitants, of whom there is any record, were the Picts, and the Irish papas and Columban missionaries, who must have brought some Irish settlers with them.

It has already been suggested that the Norse must have settled in Orkney and Shetland, *circa* 664, among the aboriginal race, the Picts, who would have become their thralls, and with whom the settlers would have intermarried.

The first Norsemen who came to Orkney and Shetland would have been adventurers, and not settlers with wives, families and thralls, such as later went to Iceland and Orkney. Consequently such adventurers who settled in the islands would naturally have intermarried with the aborigines. This kind of male settlement may have gone on for some time, before the actual *bona fide* colonisation took place.

It has already been pointed out that Shetland was not so fully colonised as Orkney, at the commencement of the Norse migration, which appears to account for the older Norse dialect forms in Orkney, and for the survival of more Keltic island-names in Shetland.

NOTE.—Unless where otherwise stated this paper is founded on *Orkneyinga Saga* (Rolls Series, text and translation). Page references are to *Orkney and Shetland Records*, Vol. I. Fb., *Flateyjarbók*. Hkr., *Heimskringla*. J.J., Jacob Jakobsen's works. S.S., *Sturlunga Saga*.

A stronger Pictish strain is thus, on that account, to be looked for in Shetland. The Norse would select the easiest landing-places, while the Kelts would occupy the inland and inaccessible places, as they did in the Isle of Man. The two inland districts of Hara and Stennes in Orkney are especially rich in the remains of the pre-Norse inhabitants—stone circles, brochs, etc.; and Ireland, the only sea-board of Stennes, is particularly inhospitable for shipping.

Besides the archæological and topographical proof of the continued residence of the Picts in Orkney and Shetland, there is the much more reliable evidence of anthropology, in the existence of a large strain of the small and dark race in both Orkney and Shetland, representing the aboriginal race, the later prisoners of raids and the later settlers from Scotland. Allowance must also be made for thralls brought from Norway.

Queen Auðr djúpauðga (deeply-wealthy) or djúp-úðga (deeply-wise), passed through Orkney, in the ninth century, on her way to Iceland, with twenty freed Irish thralls. After this, Einarr, grandson of earl Torf-Einarr, went to Iceland from Orkney with two Vestmenn (Irishmen). *Írar*, Irish, occurs in place-names in Iceland, Orkney and Shetland, in each of which two latter places there is an *Ireland*.

It will now be proved that there were only three possible pure-bred Norse earls of Orkney and Shetland, viz., the first three—Sigurðr hinn ríki, his son, Guðormr, and his nephew, Hallaðr.

The first earl of the main line was Torf-Einarr, who was half-Norse and half-thrall, his mother being probably of the pre-Norse dark race. His son, the next earl, married a Gael, and after this, through repeated Gaelic marriages, the succeeding earls in the Norse male line were never more than a cross between Norse and Gael, sometimes almost approaching pure-bred Gaels, if the rules of a modern breeding society are to be observed. The same holds good of earl St. Rögnvaldr, a Nor-

wegian, who succeeded on the distaff side, his mother being of Gaelic extraction. The Gaelic conversion of the earls was completed on the succession of the Gaelic earls in 1139.

The next step will be to show that the leading families, some of which were related to the earls, were also mainly of Gaelic descent, and in some cases probably in the male line.

As the Gaels did not give up patronymics and begin to assume permanent surnames (usually those of their chiefs), until after 1350, those who settled in Orkney before that, and became Norse in language and customs, of course adopted the Norse, in place of the Gaelic, patronymic, *i.e.*, *-son* for *mac-*. This was done by the Gaelic earls in Orkney, in precisely the same way as had been done by the Irish settlers in Iceland.

In reply to a query, Sir Herbert Maxwell writes: "You ask me to fix a date 'when patronymics flourished and ceased in the Highlands?' I think it would be impossible to do so. There were few, if any, fixed surnames in England or Lowland Scotland before the middle of the thirteenth century, other than territorial ones, derived from the feudal tenure of land. In the Highlands, the adoption of fixed names appears to have been indefinitely deferred. Such counties as Perth and Dumbarton, being nearest the frontier of civilisation, their people would find it convenient to conform to the habit of their neighbours. In more remote districts the shifting patronymic prevailed much longer, and when it was abandoned individuals frequently assumed the surname of their chief or the name of his clan, which accounts for the old patronymic 'Macdonald' being the third commonest surname in Scotland; Smith and Brown being first and second."

In the following description particular attention will be called to personal appearance, character, habits, superstitions, etc., as indications of descent.

THE NORSE EARLS.

Earl Torf-Einarr, 875-910, was the illegitimate son of the Norwegian earl Rögnvaldr, by a thrall mother who was thrall-born on all sides, *i allar ættir þrælborinn*. He was therefore half-Norse and half-thrall. His mother was probably of the pre-Norse small dark race, the Finnar or Lappir, which may account for her son being ugly, *ljótr*, one-eyed, *einsýnn*, but keen-sighted, *skygnstr*, an expression which latterly meant second-sighted, and capable of seeing elves, etc. He saw, what others did not, Hálfván há-leggr, the self-appointed "king of Orkney," bobbing up and down on another island, and had a *blóð-örn*, blood-eagle, carved on him.

His poetic genius may have been the result of the mixture of Norse and Finn. He died of sickness, *sótt-dauðr*, equivalent to *strá-dauðr*, straw-dead, died in bed, an ignominious death for a vikingr.

Nothing is known of his wife, but, as he had children before he left Norway, she was, probably, a Norwegian.

His children were earls Þorfinnr, Arnkell and Erlendr, and two daughters, Þórdís, born in his youth, in Norway (she was brought up by her grandfather, earl Rögnvaldr, and married Þorgeirr klaufi, whose son Einarr went to Orkney to his kinsmen, and as they would not receive him, he bought a ship and went to Iceland), and Hlíf, who had descendants in Iceland.

Earl Þorfinnr hausakljúfr (skull-cleaver), 910-963, was the son of earl Torf-Einarr and an unknown mother, probably Norwegian, so that he would be three-fourths Norse and one-fourth thrall in descent. He married Grelöð, a daughter of Dungað (Gaelic *Donnchadh*, Duncan), Gaelic earl of Caithness, and Gróa, daughter of Þorsteinn rauðr.¹

He is described as a great chief and warrior, *mikill höfðingi ok herskár*, and died of sickness, *sótt-dauðr*,

¹ Hkr.

and was buried in a mound, *heygðr*, in Rögnvaldsey á *Haugs-eiði*, at Hoxa. The Saga reads á *Haugaheiði*, wrongly; this isthmus would have been called *Haugs-eið*, how's isthmus, because the Norse found on it a large mound, which covered the ruins of a pre-Norse round tower, in which the earl may have been buried.

His children were earls Arnfinnr, Hávarðr ár-sæli (of prosperous years), Hlöðver, Ljótr or Arnljótr, and Skúli, and two daughters. Three of his five sons married, in turn, the muddress Ragnhildr, daughter of king Eiríkr blóðöx and the notorious Gunnhildr. She killed her first husband herself. The second husband was killed by his nephew Einarr klíningr (butter), at the instigation of his aunt, who promised to marry him, and for which deed he was thought to be a *níðingr*, dastard. Preparatory to marrying the third brother, she got rid of Einarr at the hands of his cousin Einarr harðkjöptr (hard-jawed), who was in turn slain by the third and last husband.

One cannot wonder at the character of Ragnhildr, considering the antecedents of her mother Gunnhildr, the reputed daughter of Özurr toti, a lord in Hálogaland. She, probably a Finn, was found in a Finmark cot, studying wizardry, and was brought to Eiríkr blóðöx, who, struck with her great beauty, obtained her in marriage. She was held guilty of having poisoned king Hálfván svartí. Her life was spent in plotting and mischief. She is described in *Heimskringla*: the fairest of women, wise and cunning in witchcraft; glad of speech and guileful of heart, and the grimmest of all folk. Fortunately, her daughter left no descendants in Orkney.

Earl Hlöðver (Ludovick or Lewis), 963-980, was the son of earl Þorfinnr hausakljúfr, and Grelöð, who was half a Gael, and so he was five-eighths Norse, one-eighth thrall and two-eighths Gael. He is described as

a mighty chief, *mikill höfðingi*, and died of sickness, *sótt-dauðr*. He married Eðna (Eithne), daughter of the Irish king, Kjarvalr (Cearbhall). She was learned in witchcraft, *margkunnig*, and wove a magic banner, *merki*, in raven form, *hrafns-mynd*, for her son; and predicted that those before whom it was borne should be victorious, *sigrsæll*, but it would be deadly, *banvænt*, to the bearer.

Their children were earl Sigurðr hinn digri, and a daughter, Nereiðr or Svanlaug, who married earl Gilli of Kola (Coll).

Earl Sigurðr hinn digri, 980-1014, was the son of earl Hlöðver and an Irish Gael, and was $\frac{5}{16}$ Norse, $\frac{1}{16}$ thrall, and $\frac{10}{16}$ Gael. He was a mighty chief, *höfðingi mikill*, and a great warrior.¹ He was killed in the battle of Clontarf, *Brjáns-bardagi*, in Ireland in 1014, with the fatal *hrafns-merki* wound around him, as no one else would bear his *fjándi*, fiend. He was converted to Christianity by the sword-baptism of king Ólafr Tryggvason, although he expressed his preference for the religion and carved gods of his Norse forefathers, notwithstanding any Christian teaching he may have received from his Irish mother beyond witchcraft. He gave up the confiscated *óðul* to the Orkney *bœndr* (for one generation) in return for military services rendered against the Scots. The name of his first wife is unknown,² and his second one was a daughter of Malcolm, the Scot king. His children by his first wife were Hundi or Hvelpr (Gaelic, *Cuilen*, who was baptised with the name of his grandfather, earl Hlöðver), Einarr rang-muðr, stern, grasping, unfriendly, and a great warrior, Brúsi, meek, kept his feelings well in hand, humble and ready-tongued, and Sumarliði.

Earl Þorfinnr hinn ríki, 1014-1064, was the son of earl Sigurðr digri and his second wife, a Gael, and was

¹ Hkr.

² Perhaps Hávarðr í Þraðsvík in Caithness, his *mágy* (father-, brother-, or son-in-law) points to a Caithness marriage.

$\frac{5}{32}$ Norse, $\frac{1}{32}$ thrall, and $\frac{26}{32}$ Gael in descent. He was *bráðgjörr í vexti, manna mestr ok sterkastr*, early in reaching full growth, tallest and strongest of men; *svaŕtr á hár*, black hair; *skarpleitr ok skolbrúnn*, sharp features and swarthy complexion; *ljótr*, ugly; *nefmikill*, big nose; *kaŕpsmaðr*, an energetic man; *ágjarn bæði til fjár ok metnaðar*, greedy of wealth and honour; *sigrsæll*, lucky in battle; *kænn í orrostum*, skilful in war; *góðr áráðis*, of good courage. King Ólafr found that Þorfinnr was *miklu skapstærri en Brúsi*, much more proud of spirit than his brother, Brúsi. Þorfinnr gladly agreed with all the king's proposals, but the king doubted that he meant to go back on them, whereas he thought that Brúsi, who drove a hard bargain, would keep his word, and would be a *trúnaðarmaðr*, faithful liegeman. The earl married Ingibjörg, jarla-móðir, daughter of Finnur Árnason. He made a pilgrimage to Rome, got absolution from the Pope, and built the first cathedral in Orkney, at Birsa, where he died.

He was liberal, in that he did that *frama-verk*, honourable deed, by which he provided his *hirð*, body-guard, and many other *rikis-menn*, mighty men, all winter through, with both *matr ok mun-gát*, food and ale, so that no man required to put up at a *skytningr*, inn; whereas, kings and earls in other lands, merely made a like provision only during Yule. Arnórr jarla-skáld sang to his praise in his *Þorfinns drápa*, and noted his liberal fare.

His children were earls Páll and Erlendr, who were *miklir menn ok fríðir*, mickle men and handsome, and so took after their Norwegian *móðurætt*, mother's kin, and were *vitrir ok hógværir*, wise and modest; taking after their mother, a Norwegian, is in contrast to their father, who was black-haired and swarthy and almost a pure-bred Gael.

Earl Rögnvaldr Brúsason, 1036-1046, was the son of

earl Brúsi Sigurðarson and an unknown mother, and the nephew of earl Þorfinnr hinn ríki. The *fríðastr*, most handsome of all men; *hárit mikit ok gult sem silki*, much hair, yellow as silk; *snimma mikill ok sterkr*, manna var hann gjörfiligastr bæði fyrir vits saker ok svá kurteisi, tall and strong, the most perfect man was he both in wits and courtesy; *fríðastr sjónum*, most handsome in face; *atgervi-maðr mikill svá at eigi fanst hans jafningi*, an accomplished man without an equal. Arnórr jarlaskáld said that he was the *best mennt af Orkneyja-jörlum*, the most accomplished and best bred of the earls of Orkney. From this description one would imagine that his unknown mother and grandmother had both been Norwegians. It is not stated whether he was married or had any children.

Earl Páll Þorfinnsson, 1064-1098, was the son of earl Þorfinnr hinn ríki and Ingibjörg, a Norwegian, after whom he took—handsome and modest. He was thus $\frac{1}{3}\frac{2}{2}$ Norse and $\frac{1}{3}\frac{2}{2}$ Gael in descent.

He married a daughter of earl Hákon Ívarsson and Ragnhildr, daughter of king Magnús hinn góði. Their children were earl Hákon, and four daughters, Herbjörg (ancestress of bishop Biarni), Ingiriðr, Ragnhildr (ancestress of Hákon kló), and Þóra.

He was banished to Norway, in 1098, where he died.

Earl Erlendr Þorfinnsson, 1064-1098, was the son of earl Þorfinnr hinn ríki and Ingibiörg, a Norwegian, and so was $\frac{1}{3}\frac{2}{2}$ Norse and $\frac{1}{3}\frac{2}{2}$ Gael in descent. He married Þóra Sumarliðadóttir, whose mother and grandmother are not mentioned, but her father was the son of an Icelander. The earl was banished to Norway, in 1098, where he died.

His children were, earl St. Magnús, Gunnhildr, who married Kolr Kalason, whose son Kali became earl Rögnvaldr, and Cecilia who married Ísak, a Norwegian, whose sons were Kolr and Eindriði. He had a thrall-born illegitimate daughter called Játvör (fem. of

Játvarðr, the Norse form of Edward), who had a son called Borgar,—the earliest record of this name, which, however, occurs in Norwegian place-names; they were both, mother and son, rather disliked, *úvinsæl*.

From 1098 to 1103, Sigurðr (afterwards king Sigurðr Jórsalafari), the eight-year-old son of king Magnús berfœttr, was earl of Orkney.

Earl Hákon Pálsson, 1103-1122, was the son of earl Páll Þorfinnsson and a Norwegian mother, and was $\frac{5}{8}$ Norse and $\frac{3}{8}$ Gael in descent.

He was *ofstopamaðr mikill*, a very overbearing man, *mikill ok sterkr*, great and strong; and *vel menntur um alla hluti*, well-bred, accomplished in every way. He would be the *fyrirmaðr*, leader, over his cousins, and thought himself better born, being the great grandson of king Magnús hinn góði. He always wanted the largest share for himself and his friends, and was *öfund*, jealous, of his cousins. When abroad he suffered from *landmunr*, home-sickness, and wanted *at sækja vestr til Eyja*, to seek west to the Isles (Orkney). He consulted a wizard as to his future. He murdered his cousin, St. Magnús, in order to get the whole earldom, and then made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He ended by being a good ruler, and died in the Isles.

It is not known whom he married, if he was wedded at all; but his son, earl Páll, appears to have had a mother other than his father's known *frilla* or concubine. She was a Gael, Helga, daughter of Moddan, a nobleman rolling in wealth, *göfugr maðr ok vell-auðigr*, who lived in Dalir, or Dalr, in Katanes. The Gaelic name *Moddan* may be connected with the Irish *O'Madadhain*.¹ This man's family of daughters was a disgrace even to the morals of the twelfth century. After earl Hákon's death, Helga, aided by her sister Frakök, attempted to murder her step-son, earl Páll, by means of a bewitched

¹ As his two sons had, one a Norwegian and the other a Gaelic name, earl Óttarr and Engus (Gael. *Aonghas*, Angus), probably his wife was Norse.

garment, white as snow, *linklæði hvítt sem fönn*, which they had sewn and embroidered with gold, but which her own jealous son donned and paid the penalty. Earl Páll, who naturally deemed that this precious article, *gersemi*, had been intended for him, promptly cleared them, and their family and dependents, *skulda-lið*, out of the islands.

It was the opinion of earl Rögnvaldr that Frakök was an old hag who would not do anybody good, *kerling er til einkis er fær*. She was burnt alive in her house by Sveinn Ásleifarson, for having instigated her grandson Ölvir rósta to burn Svein's father in his house. Moddan's carlines and their offspring wormed themselves into Orkney society. Frakök (a Gaelic name?) married Ljótr níðingr (the dastard) of Sutherland, and their daughter married Þorljótr of Rekavík (in Orkney). Another daughter married Þorsteinn fjaranz-muðr (dreadful mouth). Þorleif Moddansdóttir was the mother of Auðhildr, the frilla of Sigurðr slambi-djárn (the slim or tricky deacon), by whom he had an illegitimate daughter, who married Hákon kló. Sigurðr himself, was the illegitimate son of a priest, Aðalbrigð. When he and Frakök came to Orkney a great faction, *sveitar-dráttir mikill*, took place. He took part in the slaughter of Þorkell fóstri, a man much beloved in Orkney, for which the deacon was promptly deported as an undesirable alien. As the pretended son of king Magnús berfœttr, he, however, met a terrible death with remarkable fortitude. Earl Hákon's children were: earls Haraldr slétt-máli (smooth-speaking) and Páll úmálgi (the silent), Margrét, who married Maddadh, the Gaelic earl of Atholl, and Ingibjörg, who married Ólafr bitlingr (the morsel), king of Suðreyjar.

Earl St. Magnús Erlendsson, 1108-1116, was the son of earl Erlendr Þorfinnsson and Þóra Sumarliðadóttir. In descent, $\frac{5}{8}\frac{1}{4}$ Norse $\frac{1}{4}\frac{3}{4}$ Gael. In personal appearance he was, great of growth, *mikill at vexti*; manly, *drengi-*

ligr; intellectual in appearance, *skýrligr at yfirlitum*. The saga is voluminous in a description of his good qualities, etc., *e.g.*, he was a most noble man, *ágætastr*; of good morals in life, *siðgóðr í háttum*; fortunate in battle, *sigrsæll í orrostum*; a sage in wit, *spekingr at viti*; eloquent and high-spirited and generous, *mál-snjallr ok ríklundaðr*; liberal of wealth and magnanimous, *örr af fé ok stórlyndr*; wise in counsel and more beloved than any other man, *ráðsvinnr ok hverjum manni vinsælli*; gentle and of good speech, with kind and good men, *blíðr ok góðr viðmælisvið spaka menn ok góða*; hard and unforbearing with robbers and vikings, *harðr, ok úeirinn við ránsmenn ok víkinga*; he let murderers and thieves be taken and punished, high and low, for robbery and theft and all bad deeds, *lét hann taka morðingja ok þjófa, ok refsaði svá ríku sem úríku rán ok þýfsku ok öll úknytti*; impartial in judgment, *eigi vinhallr í dómum*; he valued godly justice, *guðligan rétt*, more than rank, *mann-virðingar*; munificent, *stórgjöfull*, with *höfðingjar ok ríkismenn*, chiefs and rulers; but ever showed great solicitude and comfort, *huggan*, for poor men, *fátækir menn*. Along with his cousin, earl Hákon, he burnt a Shetlander, Þorbjörn í Borgarfirði, in his house, and they slew their cousin Dufnjáll; the former for sufficient reasons, *fyrir gnógar sakir*, he being deficient in good morals, *fátækr at góðum siðum*, and the latter because he was a vikingr who harried their realm.

St. Magnús, as a youth, accompanied king Magnús on his expedition in 1098, but refused to fight, because he said he had no quarrel against any man there, and he took a psalter, *saltari*, and sung during the battle. He married an unknown Scotswoman of noble family, he had no children, and was murdered by his cousin, earl Hákon, on April 16th, 798 years ago.

Earl Rögnvaldr Kali hinn helgi, 1136-1158, was the son of Gunnhildr, earl Erlends dóttir and Kolr Kala-

son, a Norwegian, and thus $\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{8}$ Norse and $\frac{1}{2}\frac{3}{8}$ Gael in descent. He is described as a most promising man, *efniligasti maðr*; of average growth, *meðal-maðr á vöxt*; well set, *kominn vel á sik*; best limbed man, *limaðr manna best*; light chestnut hair, *ljósjarpr á hár*; a most accomplished man, *atgervi-maðr*. He numbered nine accomplishments, *íþróttir*, viz., *tafl*, chess, *rúnar*, runes, *bók*, book (reading and writing), *smið*, smith work, *skriða, á skiðum* sliding on snow-shoes, *róðr*, rowing, *hörpu-sláttr*, harp-playing, *brag-þáttr*, versification, to which may be added a tenth, *sund*, swimming, as he frequently *lagðist yfir vatnit*, in dangerous places. The king gave him the name of earl Rögnvaldr Brúsason, because his mother said that he had been the most accomplished, *görviligasti*, of all the earls of Orkney, and that was thought to bring good luck, *heilla-vænligr*.

In 1134, he plotted with his disreputable Gaelic relative, Ölvir rósta, to oust earl Páll, but was not successful. Like a good víkingr he was slain in 1158, and was briefly described as *íþróttmaðr mikill ok skáld gott*, a very accomplished man and a good skáld.

The name and race of his wife are unknown. He had a daughter, Ingigerð, who married Eiríkr stagbrellr, in Sutherland (a grandson of one of Moddan's carlines, and whose mother had been the frilla of the slim deacon), and their children were, earl Haraldr ungi, who was slain in 1198, Magnús mangi (nobody; *Mangi* is also a contracted form of *Magnús*, which is sometimes spelt *Mangus* in Orkney documents), Rögnvaldr, Ingibiörg, Elin, and Ragnhildr.

Margrét, daughter of earl Hákon Pálsson and Helga Moddansdóttir, was $\frac{5}{12}\frac{1}{8}$ Norse, $\frac{7}{12}\frac{7}{8}$ Gael, and is described as a *fríð kona ok svarri mikill*, a beautiful woman and very proud. She married Maddadh, the Gaelic earl of Atholl, as his second wife, and was the mother of Haraldr Maddaðarson, who became earl of

Orkney. After her husband's death she returned to Orkney and had an illegitimate son by Gunni, Svein's brother, for which he was outlawed. After that she eloped with Erlendr ungi, of whom nothing is known.¹ Of all the wives of the Norse earls the Saga only records three who were Norwegians, all the others being Gaels, and none Orkney women.

¹ He has been unaccountably confused with earl Erlendr, who would thus have run off with his own aunt.

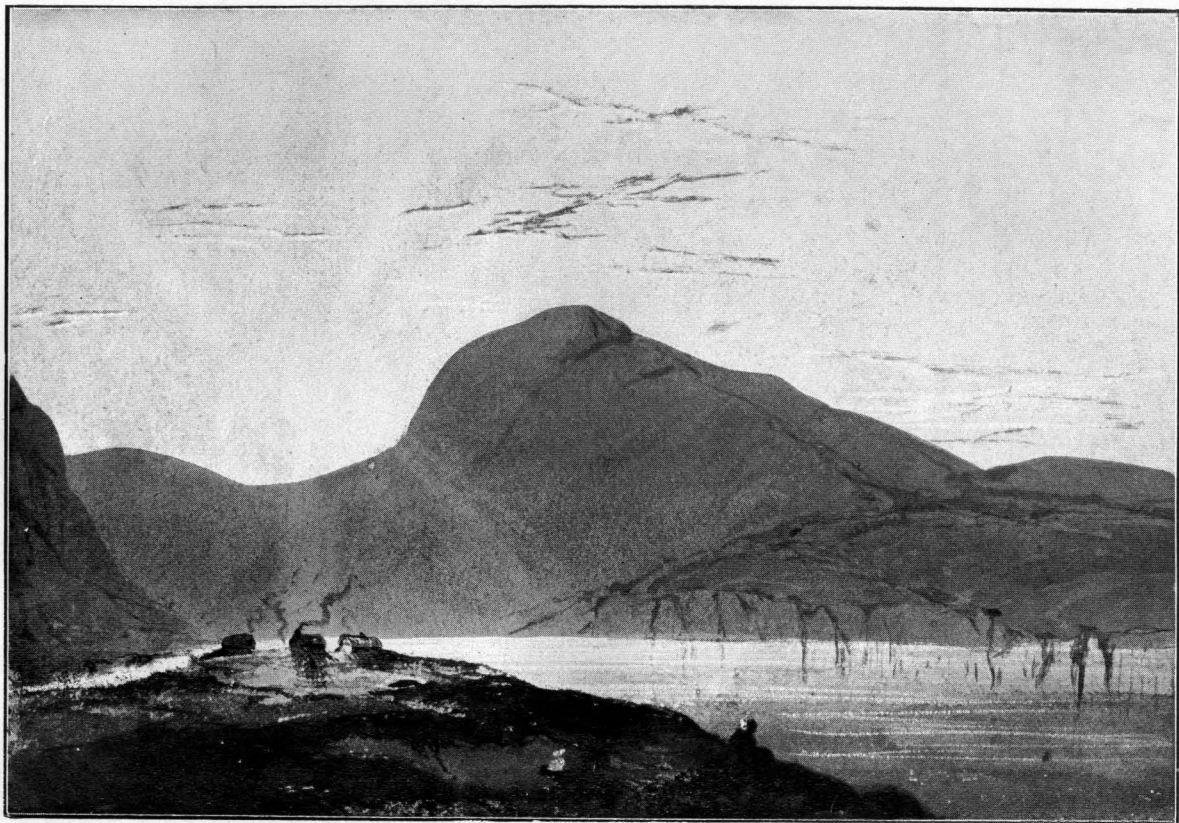
NEWS NOTES.

John O' Groat Journal. Notes on Caithness bird life by 'Abrach'—golden-crested wren, fire-crested wren, common eider, common heron, hirundines, swallow, sand martin, freak nest-building, swift (April 17; Feb. 20, 27; Mar. 20, 27; May 22, 29). Caithness poetry of the fifties by W. P. B.: W. L. Bremner, David Petrie, Jas. Sinclair (Feb. 6, 13, 27; Mar. 13; June 5). The clan Mackay and its chiefs, last to accept feudal tenure in 1499, from *Scottish Country Life* (June 5). Pulteney Notes by 'Cairnduna', fishing sixty years ago, with a note on 'rats in Orkney'—in Sanday plenty of grey but no blue rats; none in Westrey till ten years ago; none would live there; a ship, 'Travancore,' wrecked at Westrey about 1870, when all the rats that come ashore on wreckage died; none on Enhallow, the earth of which used as a scare (June 5). Genealogy of the Cormacks by J. C.—Columbu and Cormack, settlement in Iona (April 10, 24).

Northern Chronicle. Frasers of Belladrum by A. M. D.; testament of Hucheon Fraser, 1629; rental of 1634, in which a number of place-names not now known, such as Raischmoir, Askcand, Taichnult, Achitqullen, Foirleck, Easter and Wester-town. Very few surnames, mainly patronymics, trade and character names, such as McBrebiter, weaver's son (modern Bremner); a person with a saint's name was called servant of that saint—Gillecallum, Gillepatrick, Maoldonich, the tonsured servant of St. Dominic; McTagart, son of a priest; a charter of 1683, etc. (Feb. 18; April 29; May 27).

Shetland News. Obituary notice of R. C. Haldane of Lochend, Shetland, half-brother of Lord Haldane, in which it is mentioned that the family claim descent from Hålfðán, who invaded England in 871 and whose descendants settled on the borders of Haldenrig, one of whom, sir Roger de Haldane, obtained a charter of Frandie, now part of Gleneagles, from King William the Lion in 1175. Mansie's röd is continued, in the dialect (May 16).

Orkney Herald. Bull finches in Orkney and Shetland by H. W. R., in 'Nature Notes' in the *Scotsman*, and a correction by T. as to bulfinches in Shetland (Feb. 11, 25). The old grey stone at the Warth, Flottey, stands a little south-east of the Point of the Warth, and known as 'the sailor's headstone' (Mar. 25). The woodlark in Scotland by A. T. B. in 'Nature Notes' in the *Scotsman*, found in Fair Isle (May 27). The Orkney Fencibles, 1796, with a list of officers (May 27).



GLUP VO, VELL.

From the original water-colour drawing by G. Richardson in Dr. Edward Charlton's "Visit to Shetland," 1832.

Old-lore Miscellany

OF

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VOL. VII.

PART III.

JULY, 1914.

NOTES.

THE QUHOLMSLEY DOG, ETC.—The district of Quholm¹ or Quholmsley, in the parish of Stromness, Orkney, had, at one time, an uncanny reputation. A large dog was said to have come from under the bridge, across the road leading to Sandwick and Birsay, and follow travellers a considerable distance, and then suddenly disappear. It was never seen in the daytime, but only after dark. Dr Garson, a medical practitioner resident in Stromness, is said to have been very reluctant to pass that way during the night without a companion, as besides the dog, dangerous tramps were said to loiter in the vicinity. Before the present bridge was erected, there was a much smaller one, which, in a heavy rain, was not sufficient to let the water flow under it. A man and his wife, coming homeward with horse and cart, were swept over when the burn was in flood during a thaw. The woman and horse were saved, but the man was drowned. On another occasion someone overtook a woman going on foot and was to give her a lift in his

¹ In 1503, -Quhame, 1595, -Whom, ON. *hvammr*, a grassy slope or vale; Quholmsley, ON. **hvamms-hlið*; *hlið*, an opening, probably an opening in a wall which may have crossed the burn at Quholmsley (*cf.*, Orli, *ár-hlið*, in Shetland, *see* Jakobsen), otherwise ON. *hlið*, a slope. The name of the parish *Holm*, pronounced *Ham*, which has also been derived from *hvammr* is more probably ON. *höfn*, also spelt *hömn*, a haven, viz., the Bay of Ayre at the village of St. Mary's; which is supported by the fact that no farm in this parish is called Ham, from which it could have taken its name, so that St. Mary's would have been originally called Ham.—Ed.

cart. Just when she got in, the horse took fright, and the man was thrown on the road and was killed. A countryman left Stromness on foot and was found next morning lying on the road, quite dead, near Quholmsley bridge. These events happened all near the same place and within a very short time of each other. A boy was sent to look for a horse, in Quholm, which had gone astray, and ultimately lost his way in the mist. Wandering, he knew not where, he came to a house with the door wide open. Going inside, he saw the room full of people, among whom he recognised his grandmother, long previously dead. He heard somebody say: "Blaw in his een," upon which his grandmother asked, "What for?" "To make him blind," was the reply. Retorting, "Let the boy alane," she beckoned him outside, and soon after he managed to reach home. He thought he had only been an hour or two away, but his people told him he had been missing for months and given up for lost.

A young man from Yesnaby, going to see his sweetheart one evening, while crossing a meadow near Quholm, saw a dog a short distance away, and always expected to see his master, but nobody appeared. The dog became transformed into a very large object, and kept some distance in front of him until he reached his destination. This man did not venture to return till daylight, and was so terrified that he remained in bed three days after he got home. The young woman he went to see died shortly afterwards.—WM. SMITH, Newark.

TROWS IN SANDWICK, ORKNEY.—Trows were very much believed in in Orkney at one time, and a young man, when a bridegroom, was said to have been taken by them from the farmhouse of Sowie, in Sandwick, and conveyed to Suleskerry, an uninhabited islet at that time, some 50 miles off Skail Bay, on which a lighthouse is now situated. He was taken back after, what

seemed to him, a few hours absence, but his neighbours told him he had been away seven years. The bride he left had been married to another man. Strange to say, he was all grown over with hair on his return, which so altered his appearance that his neighbours had some difficulty in recognising him.—WM. SMITH, Newark, Sandwick, Orkney.

NORSE IN ORKNEY AND SHETLAND. (pp. 78-96 *ante*).—Mr. J. A. T., British Columbia, in a letter to the editor, while agreeing that a large pre-Norse strain exists in Orkney and Shetland, maintains that in Shetland “the prevalence of the Norse types is very marked and shows the prevailing strain in the islands to be Norse. This struck me forcibly when I visited Shetland, some eleven years ago, after an absence of nineteen years. It was about ‘Op heli ae,’ when the streets of Lerwick, at night, were crowded with visitors from nearly every part of the country. These people appeared to be decidedly Norse in countenance and physique, many of them being of the finest northern type, which is not too common in some parts of Norway itself. Very few individuals of non-Norse type were in evidence, and on the whole the people contrasted very strongly with the average appearance of the people in any part of Scotland that I had seen. . . . I am inclined to think the non-Norse type (or types) in Shetland is due almost entirely to the survival of the pre-Norse elements in the population and not to mixture with Scots (Lowland and Highland) in late years. I think the last has affected Shetland but very slightly and may almost be neglected. Orkney, being in closer contact with Scotland, a richer land, and the seat of Government and Church, would be affected much earlier and to a greater extent.”

In recent times, with the exception of the families of Sandison, Hoseason and Henderson, the whole of the principal landowners in Shetland bear Scottish names.

In 1716, quite *half* of the tenants and landowners who paid skatt, and of the tenants of the earldom lands, have Scottish surnames (Gaelic and Lowland), even in Unst, the northmost island. Is it not the case that the inhabitants of Orkney and Shetland, from an anthropological point of view, correspond exactly with those of the east of Scotland, which of course has a Scandinavian strain?—A. W. J.

QUERIES.

ORKNEY AND SHETLAND “QUARTERS.”—Dr. Hibbert, in 1822 (see p. 5 *ante*), suggested that Orkney and Shetland were each, like Iceland, divided into four political “quarters” (*fjórðungar*). Hibbert’s suggestion is just what might be expected from one who had a slight knowledge of Icelandic history without much familiarity with Shetland records—very few were printed in his time. He quite overlooked the fact that Orkney and Shetland were already an old Norwegian colony when they were erected into an earldom in 872, which was held as a fief from the crown of Norway; whereas the later colony in Iceland was a free republic, with a constitution peculiar to itself and not founded on a Norwegian model. The division of Iceland into *political quarters* appears to have taken place as late as 964. Large districts in Norway were divided into *non-political* quarters, thirds, sixths and eighths—*fjórðungar þriðjungar, séttungar* and *áttungar*. As Orkney and Shetland were under Gulathing Law, we consequently find the same system in use there as in Norway, *e.g.*, in 1490, we have the *áttungr* of Northmaven (Mæf-eiðs-áttungr) and the *fjórðungr* of Walls (Vága-fjórðungr), which Jakobsen shows to be the Westside, *viz.*, Walls, Sandness, Aithsting and Sandsting. Northmaven and Delting were probably the second, Tingwall and the Eastside the third, and South Shetland (Cunningsburg, Dunrosnes and Sandwick) the fourth quarter; so that

the Mainland was alone, geographically, divided into quarters. Is a term for *quarter* (other than *side*, O.N. *siða*) still known in Shetland?—A. W. JOHNSTON.

HOURIE.—Does this name occur early in Orkney? It is pronounced Hoorie, so cannot be the same as Horrie.—O. G.

REPLIES.

NAVAL ENGAGEMENT, RØNIS VO, SHETLAND (p. 57 *ante*). In answer to "Northmaven," I may say that during last winter I endeavoured to get at the truth of the tradition of the Rønīs Vo fight, and after a good deal of correspondence with the authorities in Holland, and with the help of the Society for Nautical Research, London, I think I have proved that, in this case, tradition is wonderfully accurate.

It appears from the "uitloopboekje" or list of outward bound ships of the Dutch East India Company, that the Dutch ship was "Het Wapen van Rotterdam," and the entry runs:—" 't Wapen van Rotterdam,' "uit geloopen van de Kamer Amsterdam, op 16 "December, 1673, den (day not mentioned) Febr. 1674, "door d'Engelsche in Hitland genomen"—that is, "sailed outward-bound for the Chamber of Amsterdam "on 16th December, 1673 on the — February, 1674, "taken by the English in Shetland."

"Het Wapen van Rotterdam" was a ship of about 1,000 tons and carried 60 guns. After leaving the Texel and getting into the vicinity of the Shetland islands it seems probable that her commander determined, owing to bad weather, to put into Rønīs Vo for shelter. The ship lay windbound, and her master must have deemed that his vessel could remain undisturbed until he could get a fair wind. A letter acquainting the English government must, however, have been sent to London, as on 11th February, 1674, the "Cambridge," 74 guns, "Newcastle," 54, and "Crown," 48, were

ordered to sail for Shetland to capture the Dutch ship (Cat. Pepysian MSS. Navy Rec. Soc. II., 247-280). The "Buck," dogger, was also ordered on this expedition to act, I presume, as a scout.

The "Newcastle," Captain Wetwang, seems to have taken the Dutch vessel, and by 23rd March the ships were back again in the Downs (*ibid* and Charnock, *Biog. Nav.*). I am inclined to think that the Hollander prize was taken with the squadron to England—but so far, have no authority for this statement.

The Captain of the "Cambridge" was Arthur Herbert, afterwards Lord Torrington.

Can the burial mounds at the Hollanders' Grave still be seen? I have not been at the place.

I think it is not without interest to note that this fight is mentioned in the text (in Dutch) accompanying a chart of the coast of Shetland made by my ancestor, John Bruce (born 1646, died 1724).

He says:—" north between Hamna voe and "Ronneshil or the Blauwe Bergen, is a large road with "good anchor-ground. There a large road runs in the "shape of a half-moon, S., S.S.E., S.E., E.S.E. A "good number of heavy ships can lie there sheltered "against every wind. It was there that, in 1674, the "Dutch East India ship was captured by three English "men of-war."

It will be noted that John Bruce says that the Hollander was taken.

With regard to the chart, it seems likely that the one from which the above description is taken was the 2nd or 3rd edition (all being printed at Amsterdam), the last by R. and J. Otters, in 1745, twenty-one years after John Bruce's death. It is entitled, "Nova et accuratissima insularum Schetlandiae tabula nautica," and in Dutch underneath "Nieuwe Pascaert vertoonende de Eilanden van Hitlandt," together with an introduction, part of which may be translated thus:—

“ This map was drawn by the praiseworthy and
 “ indefatigable Hit (Zetlander) and seaman Jan
 “ Bruyst, living in the isle of Whalsay at Sambister-
 “ huys (Symbister house), near the small sand bay,
 “ showing all the observations, gauges, and sailing-
 “ routes in all bays and places there made by him.

“ Without neglecting the honour or the ownership
 “ of the author, all this useful information is copied
 “ on behalf of the worthy skipper David Brouwer, in
 “ the service of their lordships the Bewindhebbers
 “ (directors) of the East India Company, and
 “ arranged properly by his brother-in-law Nicolaas
 “ Couquus. . . .”

The favourite amusement of John Bruce was to go around the Shetlands taking bearings, soundings, &c., and having made several MS. charts, they were seen by David Brouwer, the master of the Dutch East India Company's ship “ Rijnsburg ” (usually, but erroneously, called “ Reinimburg ”) which was lost at Muness, Unst, on 15th March, 1713. He was so impressed with their utility that on his return to Holland he laid a copy of the last chart before “ their lordships,” who at once saw that it would be invaluable to the East India ships (which at that time all went “ north about ”), and caused the chart to be printed for the use of their skippers.

The only copy of this chart, that I know of, is in the hands of Heer J. F. L. de Balbian Verster, a member of the Historical Society of Utrecht.

Has anyone seen the chart in this country?—R. STUART BRUCE.

MATCHES (VI., 8).—In *Domesday* occurs the name *Machus*, and there is the Norman name *Mauches*. As *ch* > *tch* (Michael > Mitchell), would *Machus* > *Matchus*? Could Matthiason or Matheusson become *Matheus*, *Matches*, in the same way as *Torfason* apparently becomes *Turfus* in Orkney? Patronymics

went so early out of use in Orkney, that one would expect the fixed ones to become corrupt. In 1653, Andrew and John Matches owned land in Rendall, and Robert in Holm. Another Norman name, Lovetot, occurs in Orkney, where it becomes Loutit.—A. W. J.

NOTES FROM THE TONGUE PRESBYTERY RECORDS.

III.

(Continued from p. 69, *ante.*)

14th September, 1737.—At Tongue. An Act bearing on the administration of the Lord's Supper and the Friday or "Men's" Meetings, as they are called, passed by the Synod is inserted in the minutes and is as follows:—"That because the Communicants in each Presbytery in our bounds are by the blessing of God become so numerous that their meeting all in one parish to partake in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is attended with several inconveniences particularly that the communicants are often straitned for want of room in the churches and that the work is render'd tedious; therefore the Synod should appoint that at least in the Presbyterys of Caithness and Dornoch where a sufficient number of assistants can be got the foresaid ordinance shall for hereafter be as often as may be administrated in two parishes on the same Lord's Day. As also, that because the meetings ordinarily kept on the Frydays before the administration of the Sacrament are often inconvenient to the ministers who join in the ministration by diverting them from what they should be principally employed about, and to the communicants insomuch as their coming from their apartments and attending these meetings takes up a good part of that day, which ought to be rather spent as much as may be in meditation and other private devotions, and

that the main design of these meetings may be obtained without these inconveniencys by the people's communicating their cases of conscience to their ministers at home. Therefor that the Synod appoint these meetings on Frydays before the Sacrament to be foreborn for the future in all the bounds of this Synod; and appoint the ministers before they come from home to assist at that ordinance to give the communicants of their respective parishes opportunitys of consulting them about such questions or cases relative to that work as may happen to be straitning to them. But that these conferences be as private as may be. Said overture being read and maturely considered the Synod unanimously agreed thereto and did and hereby do appoint this Act to be publicly intimated from the pulpits in the bounds of the Presbyterys of Caithness and Tongue first Lord's day after the ministers have got home and to that end they appoint the Clerk to give an extract of this Act to the moderator of each Presbytery before they leave this place." This Act was passed by the Synod which met at Dornoch, 1st July, 1737.¹

¹ This Act of the Synod caused an immense amount of trouble. The controversy raged fiercely and occupied the attention of the Synod of Caithness and Sutherland for years. The matter at length came before the General Assembly and by an Act of its Commission, dated 6th June, 1758, it was decided "to set aside the Acts of Synod which prohibited those meetings [Fellowship Meetings]; to allow every minister to attend them or not as he shall see cause." The Rev. Murdo MacDonald, writing on Saturday, 3rd July, 1762, says, "Yesterday, we had a sort of meeting, long in desuetude at such occasions, till of late by the ignorant zeal of the populace supported by some clergymen who affect ecclesiastic patriotism. . . . I, yesterday, after consulting my few brethren, offered to read a piece of Henry on the Sacrament, and ask about in the congregation who had best understood and remembered what was read." Quoted by Dr. Hew Morison in *Trans. Gaelic Soc. Inverness*, xi., 303, 4. In connection with the Communion services another controversy caused a good deal of ill-feeling. The Rev. Walter Ross, minister of Tongue, according to his nephew, the Rev. Murdo MacDonald, had written a pamphlet in the form of an address to the General Assembly, advocating the abridgment of the number of days on which services should be held, that is, beginning on Saturday and ending Sabbath evening. *Trans. Gaelic Soc., Inverness*, xi., 302.

Another Act came down from the Synod anent vagrants, who went about the country soliciting alms with clerical testimonials. These testimonials are not to be used outside their own parish. The Presbytery are recommended to bring to the notice of the judges and sheriffs of their respective bounds the existing laws against sturdy beggars which, if put into execution, should prevent the evil.

3rd March, 1738.—At Tongue. The affair of Mr. Skeldoch postponed. The neighbouring Presbyteries asked to send corresponding members to next meeting for assistance in coming to a decision. Angus MacKay, Achull, cited to appear and support his charges against Mr. Skeldoch—also Alexander MacKay.

31st July, 1738.—At Durness. John MacKay of Clasneach and John MacKay of Kirtomy from parish of Farr present. The Farr affair at Mr. Skeldoch's request now rests.

5th March, 1740.—At Badcall. Presbytery meet after Mr. Brodie's funeral.¹

4th August, 1740.—At Kenkail. Donald Munro of Rinovie, ruling elder, present, and John MacKay of Melness—just after Communion.

15th October, 1740.—At Tongue. The Presbytery finding that the Hon. George MacKay, advocate, resides for the most part at Edinburgh and would be of use to the church there as her representative at Assemblies etc. instruct the session of Tongue to ordain him an elder as he inclines that way himself.

9th April, 1741.—At Tongue. There is great scarcity this year and the Presbytery are urged to raise collections for the needy and hopes that beggars be not allowed to wander about for alms.

Mr. George MacKay called unanimously from

¹ Mr. Brodie died suddenly on Sabbath, 23rd February, 1740. *Trans. Gaelic Soc., Inverness*, xi., 300.

Eddrachillis and Lord Reay concurring, the Presbytery transmit the call to said Mr. George by their clerk.

23rd April, 1741.—At Tongue. Mr. George MacKay ordained minister of the parish of Eddrachillis to-day at Tongue. He died 18th June following.¹

14th October, 1741.—At Tongue. Presbytery appoint a day of thanksgiving to God for “giving us a plentiful harvest after so remarkable a dearth.”

Hon. George MacKay, advocate, reported by the session of Tongue as having been ordained an elder. He is appointed to represent the Presbytery at the Assembly.

18th August, 1742.—At Tongue. Mr. William Henderson, who received a unanimous call from the people of Tongue which was concurred in by Lord Reay, is now inducted by the Presbytery, who gave a presbyterial call as the matter had fallen into their hands by lapse of time.

24th November, 1742.—At Tongue. “Mr. Murdo MacDonalld having represented that there is a young man come to the parish to teach the Master of Reay’s children who refuses to qualify according to the laws of the Church and State in such cases do appoint that a letter be sent to the said Master of Reay earnestly entreating him to remove the said young man unless he qualify before the Presbytery.”

6th January, 1743.—At Tongue. A letter from the Master of Reay by the hand of the “governour of his children,” John Taylor, “offering him to be qualified to Church and State according to the laws of both.”

¹ His sickness and death were believed to have been brought about by a reputed witch, whose daughter Mr. Mackay severely rebuked. The Rev. Murdo Macdonalld makes a reference to Mr. Mackay’s death in his MS. Diary:—“In short never was a scene of more opposite circumstances within the compass of my knowledge, and I think the case has hardly a parallel in history or experience.”—*Trans. Gaelic Soc., Inverness*, xi. 300.

He is allowed time to prepare for his examination and so dismissed for the present.

[*9th March, 1743.*—At Tongue. Letter from Mr. William Henderson saying that he was for long confined to the house by illness and asking for supply. The Presbytery finding that one Mr. Roderick MacLennan an ordained minister lately in St. Kilda came to the bounds as itinerant preacher from Committee for Reformation of the Highlands, appoint the said Mr. MacLennan to supply Eddrachillis. “Meantime in regard the said missionary is a stranger to us he is ordered being upon the place if he can overtake it in the interval to preach in the parishes of Tongue and Durness he having preached in the parish of Farr agreeably to his letter of mission since the twentieth of February last. The Presbytery just now delay enrolling him till further acquaintance of him with the brethren and people of the country.]

[*13th April, 1743.*—At Tongue. Mr. Robert Munro licensed.]

2nd July, 1743.—At Dornoch. There is reference made to Mr. Skeldoch who is said to be “encumbered by too many tacks of land.” The Presbytery appoint a visitation to obtain particulars.

In May of this year Mr. Henderson, Eddrachillis, died.

[*24th August, 1743.*—At Tongue. At this meeting Mr. Roderick MacLennan reports that he officiated in the parishes of Farr and Eddrachillis according to appointment. Particularly that he stayed in the latter until this Presbytery by reason of Mr. William Henderson’s death which happened on 19th May last. The Presbytery appoint him to preach in Tongue and Durness parishes and to supply thereafter in the parish of Farr twixt this and next meeting of Presbytery.]

There is a reference to Mr. Munro’s licence which the

Synod of Caithness and Sutherland censured the Presbytery for granting and ordered the licence to be recalled. On page 306, vol. I., of the Tongue Presbytery Records there is a narrative having reference to the case of Mr. Robert Munro. "About the end of June or the beginning of July, 1742, Mr. Robert Munro, student in divinity, then attending the Synod at Thurso, was invited to teach the Master of Reay's children within the bounds, but on his coming to that charge finding that it had otherwise been disposed of was returning home. Some members of the Presbytery being displeased with the disappointment invited him to stay some time with them as he had no business in view. They had heard that the Presbytery of Dornoch had stopped him in his trials after entering and giving him a subject by the Presbytery their influence they pitied the young man and wanted to converse with him and to be informed of some particulars of his life that they might understand the grounds of the Presbytery of Caithness's opposition for there is no relation of blood or alliance betwixt him and us." It appears Mr. Munro was only 5 months within the bounds of the Presbytery before taken on trials. He was a native of Ross-shire where there were things said to his disadvantage.

10th November, 1743.—At Durness. The scheme of missionaries and schoolmasters and catechists for this Presbytery for the ensuing year was presented. The tenor whereof follows:—Scheme of Missionaries to be employed by the Committee for managing His Majesty's Bounty granted for Reformation of the Highlands and Islands from 1st November, 1743, to 1st November, 1744. The said Committee have appointed Mr. Roderick MacLennan minister, supply at Farr in place of Mr. William Henderson who is settled at Eddrachillis and that he have twenty pounds.

That Mr. Aenas MacKay be continued catechist at Eddrachillis with £6 of salary. That Donald Sutherland alias Happy be continued catechist in parish of Tongue with £8. That the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge have further appointed that Mr. Donald MacKay be continued at Heilam in West Moin with four pounds from the Society and as much from the Committee.

The Reports of the last Synod are now presented the tenor whereof follows:—“ (1) Collection to be taken up for Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. (2) That Presbytery make payment to Donald Brody of his burse for current year and that they take trial of his proficiency in his studies. (3) That they think of and form such regulations suiting their own bounds anent the administration of the Lord’s Supper as that said Sacrament may be administered with due frequency and at the most convenient seasons and that said regulations be laid before next Synod. (4) That said Presbytery do not give Mr. Munro an extract of his licence. (5) That the Synod having found Mr. Skeldoch blameable for absence from his Presbytery, considering the paucity and distance of their members, remitted his censure to the Presbytery. (6) That the Presbytery enquire into Mr. Skeldoch’s alleged undue encumbrances by too many tacks and that they hold a visitation of his parish for that purpose and if they see cause call for correspondents from the neighbouring Presbyteries to assist them.”

7th March, 1744.—At Tongue. Sederunt:—Mr. Murdo MacDonald, moderator, and Messrs. Ross and Skeldoch, ministers, with Lord Reay, John MacKay, of Clasneach, Donald MacKay in Durness and Angus MacKay in Kolli-strom, ruling elders.

Mr. MacDonald reported that he had supplied in Eddrachillis and moderated in a call to Mr. John Munro, minister in South Uist. At same meeting

compeared also Angus MacKay in Kolli-strom [Kyle-strome], Neil Morrison in Dale-Chrospuil and William Morrison in Kinlochbervie, elders in said parish of Eddrachillis with commission to them from the kirk-session to prosecute said call before the Presbytery.

17th April, 1744.—At Tongue. Donald Happy in Tongue did declare to this Presbytery that he is valedudinary and that he is not able to officiate in said charge and therefore did demit said office which the Presbytery considering did empower their commissioner to the Assembly to procure a commission to his son John to be teacher of a charity school and catechist in said parish of Tongue, he having formerly taught the legal school in that parish.

21st June, 1744.—At Tongue. Mr. John Munro admitted.

16th July, 1744.—The last Synod of Caithness and Sutherland having appointed the ministers who were to assist at the administration of the Sacrament in Farr to meet after that solemnity to consider what might be done in reference to removal of offence taken on account of multiplicity of tacks Mr. Skeldoch is possessed of. The meeting at Farr consisted of Mr. Murdo MacDonald, Mr. James Gilchrist, Thurso, Mr. Alexander Pope, Reay. A letter was read from the factor to the Earl of Sutherland in which the Earl agreed to release Mr. Skeldoch of all the tacks he held of him except Borgie for which he was cautioner.

3rd October, 1744.—At Farr. Meeting for visiting the congregation of Farr. Sederunt:—Messrs. MacDonald, Ross, Skeldoch, Munro with Messrs. James Gilchrist, Thurso; Alexander Pope, Reay; Francis Robertson, Clyne; Hugh Sutherland, Kildonan.

The Presbytery proceeded to the visitation of the congregation. Mr. Skeldoch was removed and the elders were asked if they had any objections to the life

and doctrine of Mr. Skeldoch. They answered they were "weel" satisfied with both, only one of the elders objected that he had heard from several in the upper part of the parish that the minister did not catchise so much as his predecessors and that he had taken too many tacks and was not inclined to entertain religious conferences but as to these things he could not charge his minister with them from his own proper knowledge, indeed he wished that his minister had not so many of the tacks as they may occasion avocation from his ministerial work. The elder was then asked if he had spoken to his minister about these faults. He answered he did not and owned it as his fault that he had not done so.

Then the people were asked if they were pleased with the life and doctrine of their minister. They answered they were. Only, three of them entered complaints. (1) That Mr. Skeldoch told the people on a Sabbath after sermon that a gentleman in the parish asserted publicly that the best service he could do his parishioners was to leave them. That if what that gentleman had said was true he and they were too long together. That he desired the people to meet with him next day to know their mind. That accordingly several met and all confirmed what the gentleman said to be true in the opinion of the people in that part of the parish. That Mr. Skeldoch having declared his concern thereat he was told by the people that his meddling with tacks and farms was what principally offended the people. That notwithstanding his solemn declaration of giving up his tacks he went to Dunrobin to get them better confirmed.

(2) That Mr. Skeldoch spends too little time in reading and studying and that one of his people viz. John MacKay in Mudil told that he was at Mr. Skeldoch's house overnight on Friday and on Saturday left him lest his being there might divert him from his studies.

After staying several hours he returned and found Mr. Skeldoch sitting without and conversing with his servants upon which he asked his grieve whether he had returned to his studies since he went away. Answered—He did not. He then asked what time he took to study his sermon. Answered—That he could not tell unless he did it on Sabbath morning. The said grieve being present was asked—He denied his having said so as far as he could remember.

Then one of the three complaining persons viz. Robert Gordon in Corrie-furan said that he himself in the most serious way shortly after Mr. Skeldoch's entry to the parish had admonished him to take heed of himself as many were watching for his halting and that Mr. Skeldoch answered that as long as his black head was on his neck the people would not get the better of him.

Mr. Skeldoch was called in and answered as to the 1st Complaint—That he himself was well apprized and he hoped that it now is evident to the Presbytery that he had the good liking of the bulk of his people particularly of those below the meeting house. That to obviate too bad results which the gentlemen's assertion above narrated might have he had made the declaration to his people which is mentioned that at the meeting next day there were present but three elders of the parish viz. George Gordon, John MacKenzie, and William MacKay. That he does not exactly remember what was said at that meeting but remembers the night following two of these elders viz. George Gordon, and John MacKenzie declared to him that they were much grieved at the proceedings of the other elder and the few people present at said meeting. Further that so far from his counteracting his declarations at Keanchyle by what he had done at Dunrobin that he used himself to his best endeavours to put him-

self in condition to fulfil it that the world can never prove that he had counteracted that declaration.

As to second article he submits it *simpliciter* to the Presbytery.

As to third article he will stand to all that he wrote to the Earl of Sutherland in relation to method of disposing of tacks.

To the fourth article he answers that he ever had and still has matter of complaint against himself on account of his indisposedness for speaking of religious subjects. However he does not remember that he ever declined entering on religious conferences with any of his people on proper occasions.

Presbytery adjourns till to-morrow.

4th October, 1744.—At Farr. The people were asked if they had any objection to the life and doctrine of their minister. They were satisfied with both. Some said it was because of envy of some who wished to get some of the tacks there was such clamour against the minister.

The Presbytery considering that a main part of the business was about Mr. Skeldoch's encumbrances as to tacks agreed to enter upon that inquiry and caused read over the appointments of Synod and minutes of their committee and finding that said committee had written a letter to the Earl of Sutherland to know his Lordship's mind anent Mr. Skeldoch's tacks. The moderator presented his Lordship's answer which being read Mr. Skeldoch was called in and asked what situation he was now in with relation to tacks. Answer—That he had signified by a letter under his hand to his Lordship that he is willing to give up all his tacks from the Earl of Sutherland. But finding from his Lordship's letter that the Earl has been informed that he, Mr. Skeldoch, had not given a tack to the present possessors of Saor (Syre) of which there are 5 years to run as he had informed his Lordship therefore craves the Presbytery to allow him to adduce witnesses to prove

that fact and the Presbytery agreed. He called George Gordon in Langdale and Neil MacAngus in Farr who were present when he gave a tack of seven years to the tenants of Saor in April, 1742. These two witnesses affirmed what Mr. Skeldoch had said. This proof to be sent to the Earl of Sutherland.

The Presbytery decide that Mr. Skeldoch's declaration at Keanchyle was rash. Mr. John Munro was appointed to preach in Keanchyle and exhort the complainers to beware of such practices in future.

As to Mr. Skeldoch the Presbytery exhort him to endeavour by the grace of God to walk more circumspectly and to take heed to his ministry with certification to him also that if it appear hereafter that he does not behave with greater caution the Presbytery shall proceed to the highest censure his misbehaviour can deserve as it shall be aggravated by his contempt of this admonition; and as to his tacks being occasion of much of this clamour they advise him to have no more than Clachan, Cromraon, and Ravigile.

(To be continued.)

AN ORKNEY TOWNSHIP BEFORE THE DIVISION OF THE COMMONTY.

XV.

BY JOHN FIRTH, FINSTOWN.

(Continued from p. 39.)

DEATH.

The worship of Bacchus, though robbing death of its due solemnity, added greatly to its terror, for with the general belief in signs and omens, the eerie feeling inseparable from attendance on the sick or dying through the silent watches of the night tended to have

a terrorising effect on minds prone to see the supernatural in every unusual occurrence. Even the most common phenomena were looked upon with dark foreboding for when

“They saw the new moon
Wi’ the auld moon in her arm,
They feared they’d come to harm.”

In every district there were certain elderly women who “had a way with” sick folk, and these women invariably professed to be gifted with the prophetic eye. In cases of sickness they were always called on for advice, and their ministrations at a death-bed or chesting were indispensable. Whenever one fell ill or died suddenly, they were never surprised, for they had dreamed dreams and seen visions. On visits of condolence these death warnings were gone over in detail, and never failed to impress the listeners, especially young people whose minds, owing to the surrounding conditions, were in their most susceptible mood. The most common death warning was “the dead jack.” This sound was, by some people, described as the tick of a watch, and by others as the intermittent fall of drops of water. Anyone who has listened intently to the working of the wood-worm knows that it is capable of producing a great variety of noises in addition to those two distinct sounds. This omen is widely believed in even at the present day, and owing to his secret methods of working and the infrequency with which he shows himself, it is difficult to convince the superstitious mind that those sounds are produced by natural means.

The dreams that foretold the passing of a soul were legion. To dream of seeing a ship on dry land betokened the seeing of a coffin soon after. The losing of a tooth meant the losing of a relative. In connexion with this a curious incident was related of a man in whom the writer never, on any other occasion, found

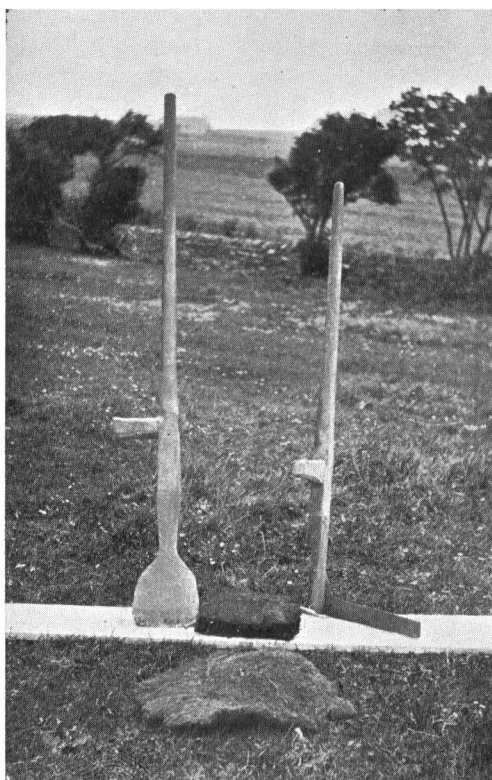


The author, Mr. John Firth, holding old Orkney scythe, and a flail. The ON. words for scythe are (1) *sigð*, (2) *lé*. modern *ljár*; *lé-dengd* or *lé-denging*, sharpening a scythe, *lé-garðr*, a swathe, *ljáfar*, the single sweep of a scythe, *ljá-mús*, 'scythe-mouse,' a slice of sod cut with the scythe in mowing, *ljá-orf*, a scythe handle. The ON. for flail is *þust*.

the slightest leaning towards superstition. The man in question, when a boy of twelve, dreamt that a number of his teeth had fallen out, and were lying at his feet on a grassy knowe. He regretted his misfortune keenly, but for his own satisfaction counted them. Unaware of the significance of his dream, he told his mother on the following day that he had dreamt he had lost a dozen of his teeth. With great solemnity she said, "Ah, boy, boy! a tooth's a friend, bit twal's ower many." Strangely enough, the figures exactly corresponded with the number of persons, including four of his relatives, who, she subsequently learned, had perished in a boating accident in the String on the day following the night of his dream. A feeling of itch in the nose always called forth the remark, "We'll sure be hearin' dead news," and the same belief was held regarding a ringing in the ears or "dead bells," as the term ran. Another certain sign of death was the appearance of a white cabbage-stock in the kail-yard. This freak was the more noticeable in that the old Orkney cabbage was of a dark colour, resembling the pickling cabbage of modern days, and rarely forming into hearts until late in the season, usually about Hallowmas. The crow of a cock after dark, or the howl of a dog during the still hours of the night, struck fear into the hearts of the listeners, for these were the portents of a death in the near vicinity; or if the two ends of a rainbow reached earth in the same district, some one within the distance o'er-spanned would shortly pass away.

As has already been remarked, intoxicating liquor was believed to be capable of combating the power of any disease, and therefore it was customary to administer either whisky, rum, or gin as long as the patient was able to swallow. So strong was the belief in the efficacy of drink as a cure for all the ills of the flesh, that a certain simple rustic, much addicted to intemper-

ance (and as the consequence of a more than ordinary bout of drinking was suffering from an attack of colic), was made the victim of an amusing practical joke. This man confided his symptoms to an acquaintance—a waggish young fellow, lately home from sea, and therefore supposed “to know a thing or two”—and his sympathising listener’s advice was to lie on his back for three days, perfectly still, and have a cog of ale placed directly over his stomach. An eye-witness of the farce states that the man placed implicit faith in the new prescription, and patiently fulfilled its conditions, to the no small amusement of his neighbours. This cure would be well worthy of a trial in similar cases now-a-days, and shows that there is something in the old saying, “Get a lick o’ the same dog ’at bit you.” A certain old Westra’ man resident in this parish often expressed himself thus, “De ting ’at tar outside an’ whisky inside ’ill no cure, is no wirt tae live.” Where the attendants on the sick had a decided taste for drink they never failed to help themselves without compunction to a full glass whenever the patient got his supply. Perhaps it was owing to this custom that the men called to wait upon a neighbour’s demise were surprised by his sudden onslaught upon one of their number, when they had thought life to be extinct. The old fellow and his wife had not lived together on the best of terms, and he, when suffering from a cold, conceived the idea that a good opportunity was afforded him of testing her affection; so he pretended that he was dying. Without a thought of bringing a doctor to diagnose the case, the prospective widow sent for half a dozen men to perform the last rites on her husband. The old man, seated in his arm-chair by the fire, kept up the ruse by gradually sinking down; but, even when his head fell forward on his chest, his attendants still hesitated to touch the supposed corpse, though his wife made signs all the time



Peat-cutting implements ; pone-spade, ON. **spán-spaði*, for flaying the surface, tusker or tusher, ON. *torf-skevi*, for cutting the peat.

that she wished them to proceed at once to the work of laying out the body. Losing patience, at length she exclaimed, "Men, hid's high time tae tak him." Thereupon they proceeded to carry her spouse to the ben end. In passing through the cellar door, James suddenly revived, and, laying hold of his staff, a guid hazel rung, which stood conveniently near, he dealt a severe blow on the head of one of the men against whom he bore a grudge. The man fell down insensible, and lay thus for a minute or two, while his companions stood transfixed; but their surprise at once changed to amusement when he sprang to his feet and shouted, "Confound thee, Jamie, thoo's be a hun'er and ninety-nine times dead afore I come to straik thee again."

As soon as the body had been *taen aboot*, that is dressed and laid out, a small plate of salt was placed on the chest of the deceased to prevent swelling. When the straiking was completed, refreshments were handed round and arrangements made for the wake. In these days a much longer time was allowed to elapse between the death and the burial than is now considered sanitary. It was looked upon as a mark of disrespect if the funeral took place before the usual time—eight days—and no matter how loathsome or infectious the fatal complaint had been, this custom was strictly adhered to. After the laws of hygiene began to be better known, one poor old woman's brother was, in her absence from home, buried before the usual time had elapsed. This proved a standing grievance to her; and, whenever afterwards his decease was referred to, she never failed to shed tears and lament that they had not kept him a week. For the wake, a number of young people were chosen to sit all night and watch by the corpse. This they did by turns; and, far from being considered a repulsive duty, it was accepted as an honour. Each relay of watchers consisted of an equal

number of young men and maidens; and when "ilka lassie had her laddie" there is little doubt but that a good deal of flirtation went on, for their vigil by the dead was cheered by a liberal supply of liquor, and card-playing and other games went on merrily.

Sandy Yorston was very much boo'd i' the shooters, and when straike'd, the big Family Bible was placed on his chest in the hope that its weight would help to straighten out his figure. While his brother was decorously reading his Bible by the flickering light of a cruizie lamp, and the young people gathered for the wake were capering and giggling "oot ahint the back," suddenly their unbecoming hilarity was brought to a standstill by a loud crash which proceeded from the box-bed wherein the deceased lay. Nothing dreadful, however, had taken place, only that the heavy volume had gradually slipped off the corpse and fallen to the floor; but, as one of the participants in this wake remarked, "there was no more fun that night." During the interval between the death and the funeral, the bereaved people were busy grinding malt and brewing ale for the chesting and the funeral. It was considered mean and most disrespectful if these two ceremonies were not amply provided for. All the most respected elderly people were invited to the chesting, and there were several rounds of whisky or ale before and after the placing of the body in the coffin. It must not be inferred, however, that the people of that time were utterly devoid of the feeling of genuine sorrow, or that every funeral was a drunken revel; but, even under the most decorous management, chestings and funerals often turned out to be more of a social gathering than a solemn assembly, healths being drunk, toasts proposed, farming, etc., discussed, and jokes told with the freedom of the banqueting hall. That the barley bree acted as a pleasant and powerful sedative for poignant grief was shown in the case of a young widower, who

evinced the deepest sorrow on the loss of his wife. He was not long, however, in choosing a successor, and at his second wedding he boldly stated that he fancied his second wife when buying malt for his first wife's funeral. Another bereaved husband, whose marital relations had not been very pleasant, was overheard singing as he ground the malt and kept time to each revolution of the quern, "Deedle-um, deedle-um, deedle-um, now can I rejoice some," thus expressing his satisfaction with, rather than grief, for the departure of his spouse.

Invitations to funerals, like those to weddings, were given by "wird o' mooth," but it was only in exceptional circumstances that the bidder received any refreshment as he went his round. At that time women, as well as men, were invited, and readily took part in carrying the bier. For one to absent himself from a funeral, after being invited, was considered most disrespectful, and was often the cause of ill-feeling between families. When receiving the company at his wife's funeral the newly bereft was thus saluted by a widower of many years standing, "Boy, thoo cam' no tae me funeral but am come tae thine." In cases of fevers, etc., it was often with difficulty that a sufficient number could be obtained to carry the bier to the graveyard; and it was spoken of as a serious matter when the mourners had to set the coffin on the ground and sit down at intervals to rest on their way to the place of interment. The barn was prepared for the funeral in the same manner as for the wedding. It was cleared out and ranged round the walls with seats. Here the company assembled in solemn silence until the liquor appeared, but after the first round conversation began, and gradually grew more animated with each successive round until, as it was often remarked, "They were bravely lood afore the minister began." Bread, cheese and ale were the standard refreshments, but these in

later days were superseded by a glass of whisky and hard biscuits. One old worthy in Redland, who enjoyed "a guid bite," was overheard remarking to a brother Straitsman, "Boy, that's better biscuit or thoo gaid me the time I cam tae see thee aboard o' 'The True Love' "—a Dundee whaler, the last of the Straits-ships to visit Orkney. Of course the minister like the others took his glass of whisky, or a taste of the ale cog; indeed it would have been a breach of etiquette for him to do otherwise, but usually his presence acted as a deterrent against further excess. There being no service at the graveside, the minister very often took his departure at the close of the funeral service in the barn, and this gave to those so inclined a chance to indulge in drink to a greater extent than they would had his restraining influence been upon them. English writers often remark on the seeming stoicism of Scotchmen, but there is little doubt but that there was a good deal of stoicism in the sons of the hardy Norsemen, one of whom as he dispensed the refreshments at his wife's funeral remarked: "This is the last cog noo, so drink and be herty; weel dú I bestow hid, for Jeannie's been a guid wife tae me"; while another, when arranging the funeral procession, shouted, "Spread you ower the rigs, folk, and be showy, for this is the last we'll see o' Baabie."

A VISIT TO SHETLAND IN 1832.

(From the Journal of Edward Charlton, M.D.).

XI.

(Continued from p. 27.)

FETLAR (*continued*).

Saturday, August 11. At an early hour we left Crosbister and proceeded to Urie to embark for Unst. Before we parted, Jerome Johnstone presented me with a specimen of the *pinna ingens*, which, though sadly broken, was at that time to me a mighty treasure. I also procured a specimen of the double-edged stone axe or steinbarte, a sketch of which may be seen in Hibbert. The minerals I had collected were stowed away in small baskets or *cassies*,¹ which are really of excellent workmanship. At Urie we fell in with Mr. W. Johnston,² a former fellow-prisoner on board the "Magnus," and as we looked again upon our floating prison, then lying about 100 yards from the shore, we poured down copious libations to her prosperous voyage to the south. We then pulled off from Unst in a small whilly, and a fine old fisherman, with a most patriarchal white beard, wished us a fortunate voyage. He was the only Shetlander, that I ever saw, who retained this noble appendage, so honoured by our Scandinavian forefathers.³

UNST.

We soon neared Unst, whose rocky shores were disagreeably contrasted with the green banks of Fetlar

¹ ON. *kass*, *kassi*, basket; *kassa-fiski*, fishing with creels.

² William Johnson, merchant, Lerwick, III. 159.

³ ON. *skegg*, a beard, also *barð*; *skeggi*, pl. *skeggjar*, bearded-man, -men; *eyjar-skeggjar*, island-beards, applied to Faroe, Shetland and Orkney islanders. *Skegg*, Vigfusson suggests, probably originally = shagginess, and so applied to the islanders as being rougher and wilder in their habits than other men.

that we had left behind. We directed our course towards Belmont, the residence of Captain Cameron,¹ and on rounding the point east of the house we perceived his daughter standing upon the extreme point of the rock, and looking anxiously in the direction of the "Magnus." We had kept so close in shore, to avoid the tide running out of Blomel Sound, that we were close upon them ere they perceived us, and after a hearty welcome, we learned that Mr. Deans² had just gone off to the "Magnus Troil" to persuade the captain to remain at Uyea till Monday. The house of Belmont is well and substantially built, but, like all in Shetland, it is without pretensions to architectural beauty. Mr. Deans returned in the evening, and a right merry party did we form, and the night was terminated by a miniature ball, wherein we figured off in our shooting jackets with great élast. I left my packages of minerals on the beach all night, being quite sure that no Shetlander would carry away a parcel of *chuckie-stanes*.³

Sunday, August 12. At an early hour the ladies went off to church upon their ponies, each ornamented with its peg and tether, done up in a neat knot upon its shoulder. I remained at home to write letters, and in the evening walked to the hill on the south-west of the house,⁴ where the young ladies, in true Norse fashion, were erecting a cairn to the memory of Mr. Deans, though their hero had neither departed out of this life nor out of the country.

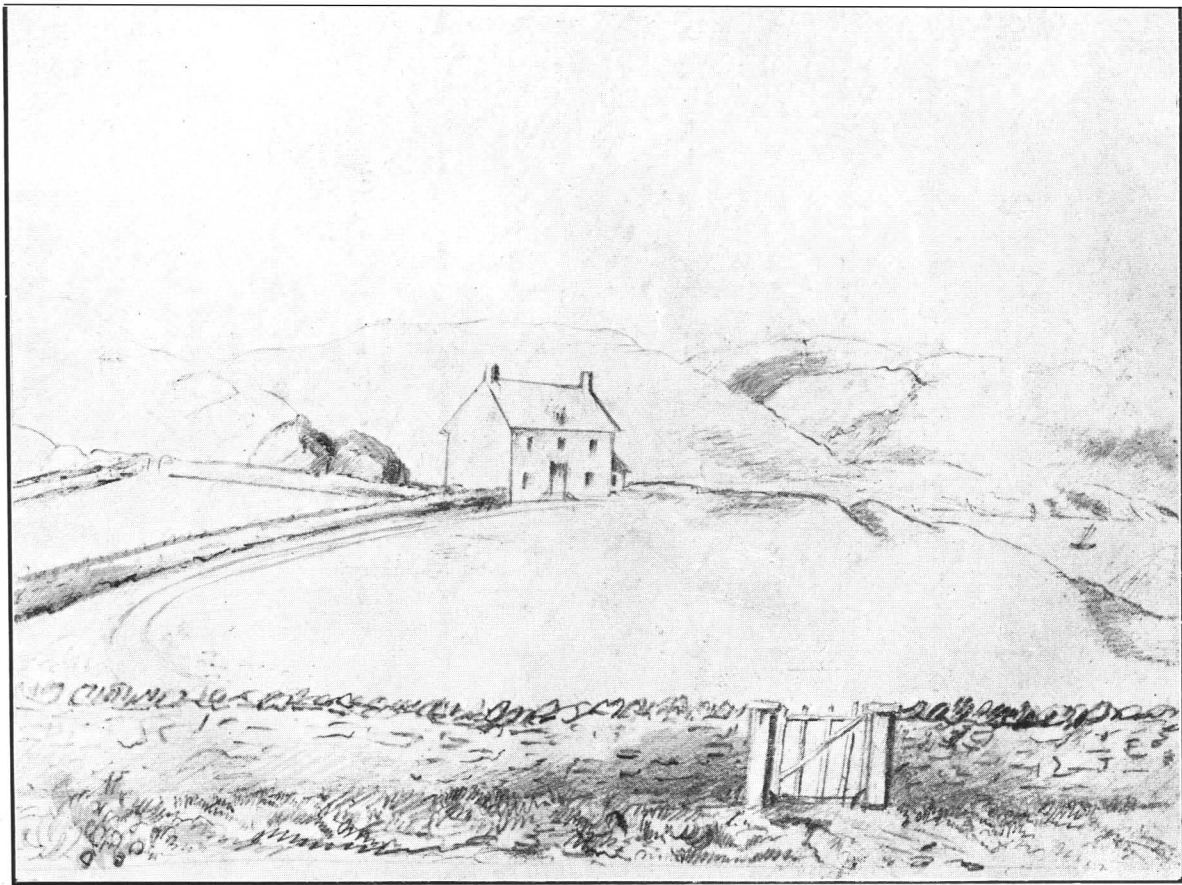
Monday, August 13. At half-past five a.m., the signal was flying from the "Magnus" for Mr. Deans to come on board. A most tender parting took place

¹ Captain Wm. Cameron (d. 1855) md. 1809, Margt. Mouat of Garth.

² See III. 159.

³ Scot., a pebble; *chuckie-stanes*, a game, Eng. *chuck-stones*, *-hole*, *penny*, etc.

⁴ What is the name of this hill?



GLUP HOUSE, YELL.

From the original pencil drawing by E. C. in Dr. Edward Charlton's "Visit to Shetland," 1832.

between the old gentleman and the young ladies, and then the schooner bore away to the south. Shortly after we engaged a boat to convey us to Cullivoe [in Yell, across Blomel Sound]. On our way thither we passed through Blomel Sound, wherein runs one of the strongest tides in Shetland, and which was long ago noticed by Sir Robert Sibbald.¹ In one part, where the water is confined between the north-east promontory of Yell [Papil Nes] and the [Blue] Moul or south-western point of Unst, the current is at all times so strong that few boats will venture to brave it. Here, on the calmest day, when the sea elsewhere was smooth as glass, I have seen the bore,² or wall of water, rise several feet in height, and spread on both sides nearly to the shore.

YELL.

We at length arrived at Cullivoe, and came to Gloup at 11 a.m. A good deal of coral had been collected by the fishermen during our absence, and from these I selected some very interesting specimens. At night we went out to the hills in search of red-throated divers on the lochs, but were unsuccessful, save that we filled our bag with golden plovers.

Tuesday, August 14. Was out all day shooting plovers on the hills, as our larder was but scanty, and in addition we procured several specimens of the *lestris parasiticus*, and some beautiful coral was brought in at night by the boats.

¹ Sibbald's *Description*, reprint, p. 73.

² ON. *bára*, a wave, billow; as a rule, the smaller waves caused by the wind on the surface of large billows; *báru-fall*, a swell at sea; *báru-skot*, waves from a fresh breeze, wrinkling the surface of the sea; *báru-stormv*, an unruly sea; *báru-stórr*, waves running high (Vigfusson). Eng. *bore*, a tidal wave in some rivers, also called *eagre* [ON. *ægir*, (1) the sea, (2) the giant, the husband of Ran, AS., *eagor*, the sea]. E.D.D.

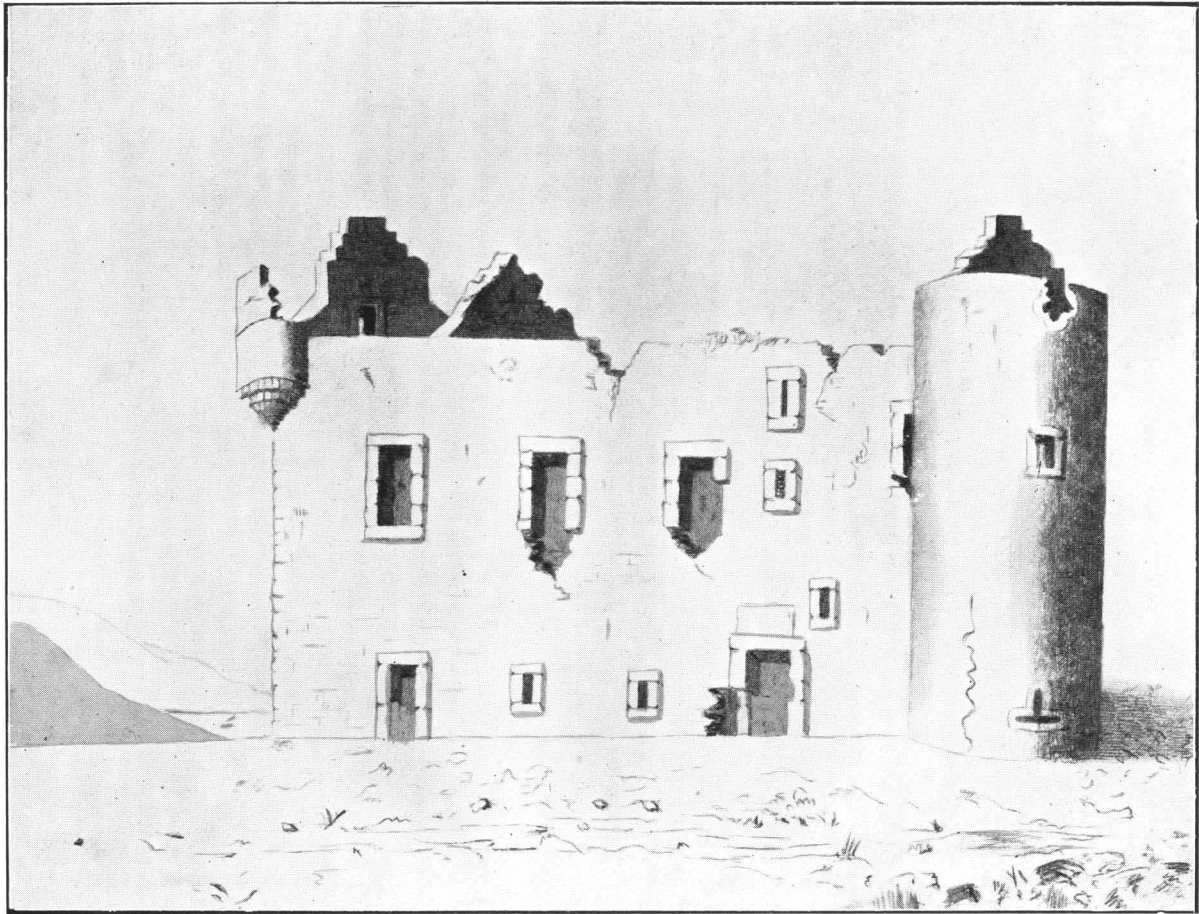
Wednesday, August 15. Was early astir this morning to pack my luggage and to finish the preparation of the birds I had shot on the previous day. After a bath in the clear depths of Gloup Voe, we started for Cullivoe, which we reached at 2 p.m., and immediately engaged a boat for Belmont. As we left I observed a poor ragged fellow, with a wallet on his back, come up to Mr. Pole's door. In a few minutes Mr. Pole came out with two letters from the south, which had been brought from Lerwick by this most unobtrusive postman. I was informed that he always made his journey on foot, accomplishing the distance twice a week, and it is at least 50 miles from Unst to Lerwick by the way of Yell and the Mainland. We delayed the strenuous exertions of our boatmen, for a short time, at the head of the Voe, to gather some beautiful specimens of the *noctius zizyphium* which was very abundant upon the rocks within high-water mark. We arrived at Belmont in time for dinner, and spent the evening as usual.

UNST.

Thursday, August 16. About 9 a.m. I set off with Wm. Cameron¹ to geologise along the south banks from Belmont to Uyea. Cameron was by far the best informed man that I had met with in Shetland, though there was an air of the *petit-maître* about him which essentially ruined him in the eyes of all his friends. It was late ere we concluded the day's work, and with a heavy load of mineralogical treasures I returned to Belmont.

Friday, August 17. We mounted two brisk little Shetland ponies and cantered away over the hills to Clugon and Mouness Castle, on the south-east coast of the island. [Here follows a description of Munes from Hibbert and Brand]. The castle is now a ruin. The

¹ Was this Captain Wm. Cameron's son Wm., who died in 1839?



MUNES CASTLE, UNST.

From the original pencil drawing by W. Cameron in Dr. Edward Charlton's "Visit to Shetland," 1832.

building stone is the common chlorite slate of the immediate vicinity, but the external walls are faced with fine freestone, which, like that of Scalloway, was probably brought from Orkney. After geologising as far as Clugon, the reputed habitat of the great horned owl, we returned to Belmont.

Saturday, August 18. A thorough northern day of wind and rain. The sky at times was clear, but the wind hurled the floods of rain against the casement. At night Wm. Cameron went to fish at Uyea Sound, but got nothing save a most thorough ducking on his way home. An express came over from Hillside, the residence of Mr. Ingram,¹ the minister of Unst; it was to inform me that H[enderson] had come there on the preceding evening and that he expected me to join him there. But the evening was too stormy for travel, and had it been otherwise, I should not have felt any wish to leave the pleasant society at Belmont.

Sunday, August 19th. The rain still continued, and only two of the ladies started for church. It certainly required considerable courage to face the storm, and the church was four miles distant from Belmont. But the Shetlanders are as zealous in this respect as their Scottish neighbours, and will cross the turbulent seas that separate them from the church, when on other days they would not have ventured to launch a boat upon the raging waters. Information was received to-day that a drove of whales, at least 200 in number, had this morning come into the bay. We accordingly walked over thither about 12 a.m., and, sure enough, as we looked down from the hill above we could plainly perceive the huge monsters tumbling and snorting in its waters. It was indeed a curious and interesting sight to view these great black porpoise-like creatures rolling over and over in the bay, at times showing only the black

¹ Rev. James Ingram, died 1879, aged 103. His father d. aged 100, and his grandfather 105.

fin, and again raising themselves more than half out of the water. It was the only time I ever saw the *caaing whale*¹ in Shetland. During my stay at Ollaberry, in Northmavine, intelligence arrived that a drove of 769 whales had been captured on the estate of Mr. Bruce near Sumburgh. This was the richest prize that ever fell into the hands of the poor Zetland fishermen; but, in 1809, as many as 1,100 were driven on shore and captured at Hvalfiord in Iceland. It is singular that the history of an animal so common in the Shetland seas should, until late years, have been almost unknown to our British naturalists. Dr. Traill, of Edinburgh, was, I believe, one of the first to describe its form and habits; but the most complete British account will be found in Bell's *British Quadrupeds*, p. 483. The word whale can indeed be hardly applied to this species, as it is, in fact, a porpoise, and is distinguished by the name of the "round-headed porpoise" in the work above quoted. To a southern reader the expression "a drove of whales" would convey a slight doubt of the traveller's veracity, accustomed as we are to regard these leviathans as solitary monarchs, ranging through their vast kingdoms of the deep. But we deal not here with monsters, our Shetland social whale is of humble dimensions, seldom exceeding 20 or 25 feet. The great peculiarity of this species is unquestionably the tendency to associate in herds, and, as is asserted by some, to follow blindly one of the drove, who may be styled the "general" or leader. This extraordinary tendency to associations, leads frequently to the capture of the whole herd; for no sooner is one individual

¹ Eng. *call*, ppl. *called*, driven; *caller*, one who drives oxen or horses under the yoke; Ork., *kaaing*; sb., the driving of whales; the number of whales in a drove; *caaing-whale*, sb., *delphinus deductor*; *caaing-whales*, phr. the mode adopted for driving a shoal of whales into shallow water. Eng. Scot., *school*, a swarm, shoal of fish. E.D.D. ON. *hvala-kváma*, arrival of a shoal of whales; *hval-reið*, *hval-reki*, a drift of whales, *hval-rekstr*, whale hunting, etc.

driven on shore, than the rest of the flock rush with a blind impetuosity towards the spot, and throw themselves forward with such violence that they are stranded on the beach, and become an easy prey to their pursuers. I regret much that I was never fortunate enough to be an eye-witness of the noble chase of whales in Shetland, which, in excitement, must far exceed any of our southern sports. We hired a small boat from a sloop lying at anchor in the bay, and pulled out among the whales, which seemed but very little disturbed by our presence. We several times came so near them in our little cock-boat that we could have touched them with an oar, and then, after a mighty snort, they rolled heavily beneath the surface. Their skins, like those of the common porpoise, were beautifully black and shining like silk. All the inhabitants of Uyea were on the *qui vive*, but, alas, the day was sacred, and the religious Shetlander moved his boat indeed down to the beach, but dared not launch it on the ocean till the dead hour of midnight was passed. And a few minutes before that hour came, the cunning whales, as though aware that their day of rest was likewise past, moved slowly out of the Sound and made for the open sea.¹

Our little boat glided over the smooth ocean to the fertile island of Uyea, the property of Mr. Leisk,² whose hospitality we were about to claim. Uyea is a fair green island, affording some of the best pasturage in Shetland. Mr. Leisk's house is situated near the centre of his property, and it presents an appearance of comfort superior to many of the dwellings of the Shetland landed proprietors. On knocking at the door, Mr.

¹Not so in Orphir, Orkney, where it is related, that a man, sitting in church on Sunday, espied a shoal of whales in the bay, and shouted "the whaals, boys!" and off he set, followed by the congregation and minister, to drive the whales ashore.

²The only notice of Thomas Leisk, of Uyea, in Grant's *Zetland Family Histories*, is that his daughter and heiress (d. 1873) m. Basil Spence of Reafirth in 1840.

Leisk himself appeared, and the first glance showed that he was no common mortal. Our worthy host was above six feet in height, and was apparently approaching his seventieth year, gaunt and bony, but with a humorous and somewhat satirical expression of countenance. To describe him from top to toe, we must first commence with his wig. It was an inimitable affair of the scratch genus, and of a lovely chestnut hue. This pericranial covering sate easy on his revered head, as it appeared a matter of perfect indifference to the possessor which portion of the peruke reposed upon his forehead or his occiput. He was clad in a loose blue coat with huge brass buttons, and while this upper garment was a world too wide for his sinewy frame, his trousers presented a perfect contrast, being, below the knee, as tight as a dancing-master's pantaloons. Mrs. Leisk was a buxom Dumfriesshire dame, from the neighbourhood of Moffat, but having been now many years settled in Uyea, her associations with the south of Scotland were few and far between. We dined with the old gentleman, and right merry was he, for he was full of anecdote, relating to the island which he owned, and could tell many a curious tale of other parts of Shetland. It was late ere we returned to Belmont, but the whales were still in Uyea Sound, and we retired to rest with the anticipation of a glorious scene of excitement and slaughter on the morrow. *Hiatus valde deflendus !!* (Of the first visit to Shetland beyond this period I have but the brief accounts contained in a journal written at the time, and also a few portions which were drawn out with greater care and more at length. For my own amusement, and, I fear, with but little benefit or satisfaction to others, I shall here conclude by copying out from the shorthand, in which it is concealed, the chief events that occurred in 1832, till my departure from Shetland).

Monday, August 20th. Went to Uyea Sound at 5 a.m., but the whales had been up before us, and had moved out of the bay before twelve.

ORKNEY AND SHETLAND FOLK,
872—1350.

BY A. W. JOHNSTON.

II.

(Continued from p. 96 *ante*.)

THE GAELIC EARLS.

Earl Haraldr Maddaðarson, 1139-1206, was the son of Margrét Hákons-dóttir and Maddadh, Gaelic earl of Atholl (Gaelic, *maddadh*, a dog), and was $\frac{5}{8}$ Norse, $\frac{2}{5}$ Gael. When about twenty years of age, he was *mikill maðr vexti ok sterkr, ljótr maðr ok vel vitr*, a big man in growth and strong, an ugly man and well-witted. He was a *mikill höfðingi*, great chief; *mannu mestr ok sterkastr*, the tallest and strongest of men; *ódæll ok skap-harðr*, overbearing and harsh.

He was twice married, viz., (1) Afreka, daughter of Duncan, Gaelic earl of Fife, whom he repudiated, and (2) Hvarflöð (Gaelic, *Gormflaith*), daughter of Malcolm, earl of Morhæfi (Moray). The names of the children of the first were, Heinrekr (Henry), Hákon, Helena, Margrét, and by the second, Þorfinnr, Davið, Jón, Gunnhildr, Herborg, and Langlíf. He allowed a rebellion, against king Sverrir, to be hatched in Orkney, for which he had Shetland taken from him in 1194, when it was placed under the government of Norway,¹ and was not restored to the earls till 1379.

Here the *Orkneyinga Saga* (oral tradition) ends, and with it exact history, and information about the suc-

¹Fb.

ceeding earls (the descent of four of whom is uncertain) is derived from documents few and far between. In only one instance is the name of a wife mentioned, through whom the earldom passed from one line to another, and no children are recorded beyond the succeeding earls.

Earl Haraldr Maddaðarson was succeeded by his sons, earls Davið Haraldsson, d.s.p. 1214, and Jón Haraldsson, slain, 1231, the latter having been predeceased by his son, Haraldr Jónsson, who was drowned in 1226.¹ Earl Jón Haraldsson was succeeded by Malcolm, the Gaelic earl of Angus, from whom the title was transferred to his kinsman (uncle or cousin), earl Magnús, who was succeeded by his son or brother, earl Gilbert (Gaelic, *Gilleabart*), who was succeeded by his son, earl Magnús Gilbertsson, who was succeeded by his sons, earls Magnús and John and another earl Magnús, after which the earldom passed to Malise, (Gaelic, *Maoliosa*), Gaelic earl of Strathearn, through his great grandmother, a daughter of earl Gilbert. After Malise, the earldom, after an interregnum, passed to his daughter's son, Henry St. Clair, in whom the earldom was vested in 1379. His grandson, earl William, after the wadset of Orkney and Shetland to Scotland in 1468-9, resigned his right to the earldom to the crown of Scotland in 1470, when it was annexed to the crown as a royal title.²

THE GÆÐINGAR : EARL'S MEN.

The suggestion of Vigfússon in the Oxford *Dictionary* that the *gæðingar* of the earls of Orkney were synonymous with the *lendir-menn* of the kings of Norway can be amply proved by the Saga. One explicit instance gives a clue to the whole mystery, viz., that of Kúgi, a *gæðingr* (of earl Páll), whom we find

¹ Isl. Annals.

² Scots Peerage.

living in Hreppisnes, now Rapnes, in Westrey. The bú of Rapnes, Swartmeill, and Wasbuster, were, in 1503, described as *boardlands* or *borlands* of the old earldom, paying no skattr. *Bordland* or *borland* is a Scottish loanword, meaning, "land kept for the board of the laird's house."¹ The Oxford *New English Dictionary* states that the form *bordland* is first found in Bracton, c. 1250, by whom it is wrongly derived from *bord*, a table, whereas it is from M. Lat. *borda*, a hut, cot, and was applied to land held in *bordage* tenure by a *bordar*, a villein of the lowest rank, a cottier. The Gaelic *bòrlum*, royal castle lands, *borlanachd*, compulsory labour for a landlord, must also come from the same source.

Boardland in Orkney is, therefore, a translation of Old Norse *veizlu-jörð*, land granted in fief for military service and for the entertainment of the superior when on circuit. In accordance with the *Hirðskrá* of king Magnús Hákonsson, the earl, while prohibited from disposing of the earldom lands, was permitted to grant earldom lands *at veita* or *at veizlu*, *i.e.*, in return for military service and entertainment. It seems certain that the same privilege was allowed by the older *Hirðskrá*, which is now lost.

To return to Kúgi, he had the *upp-kvöð* or *útböð*, the calling out of the levy, of ships and men, *leiðangr*, in Westrey. As he was the instigator, *upphafsmaðr*, of a secret þing, *laun-þing*, in Westrey, he probably acted as the representative of the earl in the district assembly [*hérads þing*]. The localities of the other *gœðingar* support the above conclusion.

Þorkell flatr was also in Westrey; Þorsteinn Hávarðsson Gunnason had the calling out of the levy in Rinansey, and his brother Magnús that of the adjoining island, Sandey, where there were the boardlands

¹ *Scottish Land-Names*, by sir Herbert Maxwell, bt., 123, Macbain's *G. Dict.*, s.v. *bòrlum*.

of Brugh, Halkisnes, Tofts, Lopnes and Tresnes; Valþjófr Ólafsson was in Stronsey, where there were skatt-fré lands; Sigurður á Vestnesi in Rousey, where part of Westnes was old earldom land, and with whom we find the earl *á veizlu* in 1136; and this leads to the conclusion that the *gœðingar* also held skattland as well as skatt-fré land of the earldom *at veita*; Jón vængr abode in Háey, where there is boardland. The earls also gave gifts, *veita gjafir*, to their friends, the *gœðingar*.

Gæði means, among other things, profits, emoluments, etc. It seems certain that the *gæði* in Caithness, which the king of Scotland restored to Sveinn Ásleifarson, in 1152, were the *gæði* of the earldom, which he had formerly held as *gœðingr*.

The *gœðingar* of Orkney (and Shetland?) were thus the feoffees of the earl of Orkney, from whom they received grants of earldom land, *veizlu-jörð*, *at veita* or *at veizlu*, in consideration of military service and the entertainment of the earl, when on circuit. As the feoffees of the earl's *gæði*, or emoluments, they received the name of *gœðingar*, corresponding to the *lendirmenn*, landed men, of Norway, who were so-called because they held land or emoluments from the king for similar duties. A distinction in nomenclature had to be drawn between the king's and the earl's feoffees.

As was to be expected, some of the *gœðingar* were related to the earls—remunerative government offices were then, as now, conferred on the relatives and favourites of the rulers. Their military service included the *upp-kvöd* or *útboð*, calling out of the *leiðangr*, levy, the superintendence of the *vitar*, beacons, etc.

Their civil functions probably included attendance at the local assembly [*hérads þing*], the nomination of delegates, *lögréttumenn*, to the jury, *lögrétta*, of the lawthing, and generally the representation of the executive in their respective districts.

As the callers out of the levy of ships and men, the *gœðingar* were necessarily located at strategical points, with easy access to the sea and in close touch with the beacons.

Mr. J. Storer Clouston has suggested with regard to the Orkney place-name, *Clouston*, older forms, *Cloustath* and *Clouchstath*, which probably represent an original **kló-staðr*, claw-stead, that *kló* is "the original proprietor's name—possibly Hákon kló of the Saga."¹

Now Hákon kló, who flourished *circa* 1150, was a *gœðingr*, and was presumably connected with the islands of Sandey and Rinansey, over which his brothers were *gœðingar*, and there is no historical or traditional evidence associating him or his family with Clouston, in any way.

Dr. Jakob Jakobsen has pointed out that *kló*, f., a claw, denotes, in Norse place-names, something projecting, curved or pointed. It occurs in a large number of place-names in Shetland, including an identical name to that in Orkney, viz., Klusta, **Kló-staðr*, *-staðir*, a district situated on a headland between two bights. Now the *bú*, or principal farm, of Clouston, from which the whole township takes its name, is also situated on a ness; and directly opposite to the house is a claw-formed or curved tongue of land which projects into the Loch of Stennes, which leaves no possibility of a doubt as to the true origin of the name.

With regard to nicknames, those which are person forenames in themselves, such as *brúsi*, buck, and personifications such as *hlaupandi*, landlouper, etc., are used in place-name formation; while nicknames which merely point to an eccentricity in personal detail and are attached to forenames, such as *kló*, finger-nail, *flat-nefr*, flat nose, *rang-beinn*, *-eygr*, *-muðr*, wry-legged, squint-eyed, wry-mouth, etc., do not lend themselves for place-

¹ *Sandey Church History*, by Rev. Alex. Goodfellow, Kirkwall, 1912, p. 78.

names, *quasi*, "flat-nose's farm." But even if such nicknames were detached from their forenames and applied to places, they would be in the genitive case, *e.g.*, if Hákon kló had been known as kló (of which there is no evidence) then his farm would have been called **Klóar-staðr*, Claw's farm, not **kló-staðr*, claw-farm, which could only point to a claw-formation in the place, such as we actually find in Clouston itself, and hence the name.

Circumstantial evidence is against Hákon kló, a *gœðingr*, with the *uppkvöð* of the *leiðangr*, levy of ships and men, being landlocked in one of the very few inland townships in Orkney, situated from two to three miles from the nearest easy landing place. Earl Haraldr Maddaðarson in going from Grímsey to Fjörðr (Firth) by way of (Clouston and) Orkahaugr (Maeshowe), chose Hafnarvágr (Stromness harbour) as his landing place, and the same choice would be made now.

The nearest coast to Clouston is that of Ireland, which is quite unsuited for shipping, owing to its exposed position, shallow water, extensive beach at low water—a place to be avoided by sea-going craft. Moreover, it has been shown that the *gœðingar* were in the occupation of earldom lands, of which there was absolutely not a pennyland in Stennes, and next to none in the adjoining inland parish of Hara. This lack of earldom land in these inland districts, corroborates the supposition (p. xx.), *viz.*, that the earldom estate was formed of the confiscated estates of the leading *víkingar* of 872, which would naturally be situated on the seaboard with easy landing places, which is a characteristic of the earldom estate; while the two inland and inaccessible districts of Stennes and Hara are remarkable for their wealth of Pictish remains and dearth of earldom lands.

The last notice we have of the *gœðingar* is in 1232, when a shipload of them, *gœðinga-skip*, were drowned.

Possibly the eighteen men of Haraldr Jónsson, son of earl Jón Haraldsson, who were drowned, along with him, on June 15th, 1226, were also *gœðingar*.¹

INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES.

In 1106, Dufnjáll (Gaelic, *Domhnall*, Donald), son of earl Dungaðr (Gaelic, *Donnchadh*, Duncan) was a first cousin once removed on the father's side, *firnari en bræðrungr*, of earls Hákon and Magnús, by whom he was slain. Dufnjáll's grandfather must have been an illegitimate son of earl Þorfinnr hinn ríki, who lived mostly in Caithness, and was almost a pure Gael.

In 1159, Jómarr, a kinsman of earl Rögnvaldr, is mentioned in Caithness, and his name may be the Norse form of some Gaelic name.

In 1116, Gilli (Gaelic, *gille*, servant) was a *dugandi-maðr*, a doughty or good man, with St. Magnús, and probably a relative of the earl's Gaelic wife.

Kúgi (G., *Cogadh*), 1128-1137, was a wealthy *bóndi* and a *gœðingr* of earl Páll, and lived in Hreppisnes, now Rapnes, in Westrey, which he would have held as *veizlu-jörð*. Nothing is told of his family or relations. He is described as a *vittr*, wise, man, and had the *uppkvöð*, calling out of the levy, in Westrey. As a schemer himself, he smelt a rat when the invading earl Rögnvaldr played a clever trick in getting the Fair Isle beacon lit; and his pawky *eyrendi*, speech, thwarted the internecine complications which that deed was designed to arouse. Earl Rögnvaldr, however, unexpectedly, landed in Westrey, whereupon the *eyjar-skeggjar*, the "island beards," *hljópu saman*, louted together, to get Kúgi's *ráð*, advice, which was that they should at once get *gríð*, peace, from the earl; and he and the Vestreyingar submitted to the earl and swore oaths to him. One night, however, the earl's men caught Kúgi napping at a secret meeting for *svíkræði*,

¹ Isl. Annals.

treachery, against the earl. He was promptly put *i fjötra*, in fetters. When the earl arrived on the scene, Kúgi fell at his feet and *bauð*, offered or left, all his case in God's hands and the earl's. He then tried to shift the blame on to others, and asserted that he had been brought to the þing, *nauðigr*, unwilling, and that all the *bœndr* had wanted him to be the *upphafsmaðr*, instigator, of the *ráð*, plot. The Saga states that Kúgi pleaded his own cause *orðfærliga*, with great elocution or glibly. Fortunately for Kúgi's life, the humour of the situation tickled the earl's poetic fancy to such a degree that he could not resist the temptation of letting off steam in one of his habitual improvisations, stuffed with scathing ridicule; a lasting punishment, more severe than the decapitation, or sound drubbing, which the object of his poetic flight so richly deserved.

The earl referred to the fettered man before him as a *kveld-förlestr karl*, a night-journey-hampered carl or old duffer, and advised him, in future, never to hold *nátt-þing*, night meetings—which Vigfússon says were not considered proper. The earl, further, admonished him that it was needful to keep one's oath and covenant. *Grið*, peace, was given to all, and they bound their fellowship anew. Exit Kúgi, of whom nothing further is related, beyond the one line which is preserved of *Kúga drápa*, 'in praise of Kúgi,' and which runs:

*Megin-hræddir ro menn við Kúga, meiri ertu hverjom þeira.*¹
All are afraid of Kúgi, thou outdoest them all.

This can only have been intended as biting sarcasm. His name and character indicate that he was a typical bad Gael of his class.

SVEINN GROUP.

The next persons to be described are the family, relatives and companions of Sveinn Ásleifarson.

¹ *Skálda*.

Ólafr Hrólfsón was a *gœðingr* of earl Páll, and owned Gareksey (Gairsey) in Orkney, and another *bú* in Dungalsbœr á Katanesi. He was a most masterful man, *mesta afarmenni*, and his wife, Ásleif, was wise and of great family, *vittr ok ættstór*, and most imperious, *ok hin mesta fyrir sér*. In 1135, Ólafr had a great suite, *sveit mikla*, á Katanesi, which included his sons Sveinn and Gunni, and Ásbjörn and Murgaðr, sons of his friend Grímr of Svíney. His wife also lived in Caithness at this time. Their children were Valþjófr (an English name), Sveinn, Gunni, all well-bred men, *velmenntir*, and a daughter, Ingigerðr. Ólafr had a brother Helgi, who lived in Þingvöllr in Hrossey, now Tingwall in Mainland of Orkney, where the þing was held.

Sveinn Ólafsson, after his father's burning, was called Ásleifarson, after his mother. He married (1) Ragnhildr, (2) Ingirið Þorkelsdóttir, a kinswoman of earl Haraldr Maddaðarson, and the widow of Andrés of Suðreyjar or Man. His children were, by (1) Ólafr, and by (2) Andrés, who married bishop Biarni's sister, Fríða, and was the father of Gunni, whose son, Andreas, was in Iceland in 1235 (SS). Sveinn was a wise man and prophetic, *forspár*, about many things, unfair and reckless, *újafnaðarmaðr ok úfyrrleitinn*. When drinking with his karlar he took to speaking, *hann tók til orða*, and rubbed his nose, *ok gneri nefit*, and remarked, "it is my thought" about so and so, and then mentioned his foreboding, *hugboð*.

As an illustration of Svein's masterful unfairness may be mentioned his expedition against Holdboði. He asked the earl for *lið*, assistance, and got five ships, of which the captains were Þorbjörn klerkr (a grandson of Frakök and a brother-in-law of Sveinn), Hafliði son Þorkels flettis, Dufnjáll son Hávarðs Gunnasonar, Ríkgarðr (Richard) Þorleifsson and Sveinn himself. However, Holdboði judiciously fled, but they slew

many men in Suðreyjar and plundered wide and burnt and got much booty, *fé*. On their return, when they were to share their *herfang*, war spoil, Sveinn said that they should all share equally except himself, who should have a chief's share, *höfðingja-hlutr*, because, he said, he alone had led them, and the earl had given them to him for help, *til liðs*, and he alone had a quarrel with the Suðreyingar, and they none. Þorbjörn thought that he had worked as much and had been as much a leader, *fyrirmaðr*, as Sveinn. They also wished all the ship-captains, *skipstjórnar-menn*, to have equal shares, *jafnir hlutir*. But Sveinn would have his own way, *vildi þó ráða*, and he had more men in the Nes than they had. Þorbjörn complained to earl Rögnvaldr about Sveinn robbing them of their shares, *göra hlut ræningja*. The earl said it was not the only time that Sveinn was an unfair man, *engi jafnaðarmaðr*, and the day of retribution would come for his wrong-doing, *ranglæti*. Although the earl made good what Sveinn had cheated him of, Þorbjörn declared himself divorced from Svein's sister. The declaration made by him, *segir skilit við*, corresponds with old Gulathinglaw, "ef maðr vill skiliast við kono sína þa skal hann sva skilit segia at hvartveggia þeirra mege heyra mal annars oc have við þat vatta." The consequence of this was hostility, *fjándskapr*, between them, which had its advantage, as it was now a case of "Foruðin sjást bezt við"—the wrongdoer can best detect his fellow. In contrast with the above is Svein's sportsmanlike treatment of earl Rögnvaldr. When earl Erlendr and Sveinn were at feud with earl Rögnvaldr, on the latter's return from his crusade, they captured his ships and treasures. Sveinn claimed earl Rögnvald's treasures as his share of the spoil, which he promptly sent back to the earl. Being a keen-sighted man, he probably anticipated that his drunken ally, earl Erlendr, would ultimately be defeated by earl Rögn-

valdr, whose treasures from the Holy Land may have been mainly curios and relics of no great market value in the eyes of a vikingr.

Sveinn is further described as of all men the sharpest-sighted, *skygnastr*, and saw things which others could not see. It was the opinion of Jón vængr, junior, that Sveinn was a truce breaker, *grið-niðingr*, and was true to no man. When Sveinn was besieged by land in Lambaborg, which was built on the edge of the cliff, he escaped by being let down by ropes into the deep sea, and then swam along the coast until he found a landing-place. It was earl Rögnvald's opinion that such exploits were both brave and hardy, and that Sveinn was without a match. When earl Harald advised him to give up roving and twitted him with being an unfair man, *újafnaðarmaðr*, Svein's answer was *tu quoque*, and there the discussion ended. The Saga sums him up as "mestr maðr fyrir sér í Vestrlöndum," the most masterful man in the West, both of old and now, of those men who had no higher *tignar-nafn*, rank, than he.

Of Svein's relatives may be mentioned Eyvind Melbrigðason (Gael., *Maelbrighde*, servant of St. Bride or Bridgit). He was one of the *göfugir-menn*, great men, with earl Páll, and superintended the earl's famous *Jóla-boð mikit*, great Yule feast, at which Sveinn killed Sveinn.

Eyvind schemed to make his kinsman Sveinn Ásleifarson quarrel with his namesake, Sveinn brjóstreip, and having succeeded in this, he then plotted with Sveinn to kill Sveinn, and arranged an artful manœuvre, by which the second Sveinn, before he died, killed his own relative, Jón, the only other witness of the murder. Magnús Eyvindsson, by Eyvind's arrangement, took Sveinn by horse and boat to Damsey, where Blánn sheltered him, and took him afterwards secretly to the bishop. Blánn (Gael., *flann*, red), took charge

of the castle in Damsey. His father, Þorsteinn of Flyðrunes, his brother Ásbjörn krók-auga (squint-eye), and himself were all *údælir*, overbearing, men.

Jón vængr, senior, a relative of Sveinn, abode in Háey á upplandi. He was a *gœðingr*. His brother Ríkarðr (Richard), abode in Brekka í Strjónsey; they were notable men, *gildir-menn*. They burned Þorkell flatr, a *gœðingr*, in the house which their kinsman, Valþjófr, had owned. The earl had given Þorkell the house for finding out where Sveinn (the brother of Valþjófr) had fled to, after the murder for which he had been outlawed.

Jón vængr, junior, was a systur-son of Jón vængr, senior, and became earl Harald's *ármaðr*, or steward. He had two brothers, Blánn (Gaelic, *Flann*) and Bunu-, or Hvínu-Pétr; (*buna*, a purling stream, and *hvína*, to whistle or whine). These two were ignominiously disgraced by Sveinn in a mock execution, to shame their brother Jón, who had given Sveinn a bad character.

Of Svein's companions may be mentioned Grímr, in Svíney, a *félitill*, poor, man, and his sons Asbjörn and Murgaðr (Gael., *Murchadh*, Murdock). Sveinn, who was *sýslumaðr* for the earl in Caithness, on one occasion, in his absence, deputed his office to Murgaðr, who turned out *sakgæfnn*, quarrelsome, and *áleitinn*, provocative, and was *úvinsæll*, unpopular, for his *újafnaðr*, tyranny. Along with Sveinn, he did much *úspektir*, uproars, *i ránum*, in plunder, in Katanes.

As has already been mentioned, Ólafr Svein's father was burnt in his house in Caithness at the instigation of the hag, Frakök, whom Sveinn, in turn, burnt in her house.

Svein's father had estates both in Orkney and Caithness, and as he resided in Caithness, where he had the *yfirsókn*, the stewardship, of the earldom, and where Sveinn was afterwards *sýslumaðr*, the family appears to have been a Caithness one, and the Caithness Clan

Gunn claimed to be descended from Gunní Ólafsson. This, taken in conjunction with the personal characteristics and the numerous Gaelic names of members of the family, relations and friends, makes it probable that these families were all of Gaelic descent in the male line.

NEWS NOTES.

JOHN O' GROAT JOURNAL.

Sir Walter Scott and a North Sutherland Carpenter. Scott visited Loch Eriboll in 1814, where he found a carpenter (James Low, Rispond, an expert in boat building and a remarkable man), building a ship without assistance, "lest it should be said he could not have finished the task without" the aid of other carpenters. The name of this particular ship is not known, but she was wrecked near Thurso, and Low soon replaced her with another of smaller dimensions, with which he sailed the Pentland Firth and Orkney for many years. Low originally hailed from Orkney and settled in Durness, where he married a grand-daughter of the Rev. Murdoch Macdonald, minister of Durness, 1726-1764. (From a letter by Angus Mackay, *alias* "Eric," June 19th).

Caithness Poetry of the Fifties, VII., June 12, by W. P. B.—Wm. L. Bremner, "Why sigh," "To James Steven, Dundee," "Farewell," "The Old Maid's Song," "The freens o' auld lang syne."

Notes on Caithness Bird Life, by "Abrach," vi. The hirundines, etc.

The Great Border Dog Hunt. Exciting experiences recalled and graphically described, by James Scott, Troneyhill, July 17, 24. This hunt for a stray setter which had been worrying sheep, took place in the seventies of last century, and is described by Mr. Scott, a well-known sheep-dog judge.

"*Up e' coast*" again. The romantic and business side of peat-cutting, by "Observer," July 3, 10, 24. These articles describe peat-cutting, women workers thirty-five years ago, etc.

Old-lore Miscellany and Records. Reviewed July 10.

NORTHERN CHRONICLE.

Highland Notes and Queries. Chiefship of Clan Donald, June, 17, 24.

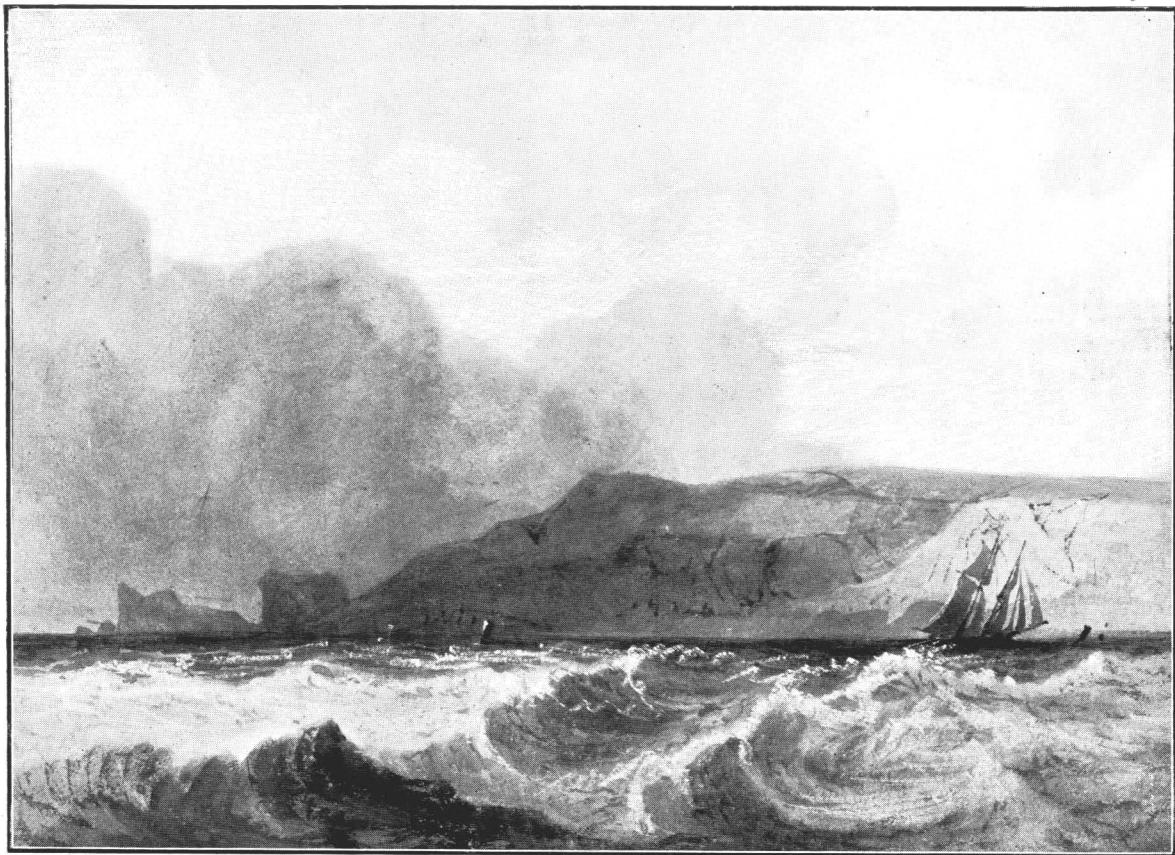
Frasers of Belladrum, 1647-91, by A. M. D., June 24, July 1, includes a feu tack of 1691 granted by lord Lovat to Hugh Fraser, of Belladrum.

Old-Lore Miscellany, reviewed July 8, in which it is suggested that *whipkull*, egg whipped with rum, is derived from Gaelic *cop-gheal* = white foam.

Orcadian. Nature Notes, June 27, on the horse tooth-rock of Yesnaby; and the ring ouzel, a rare visitor in Orkney, recently observed near Kirkwall.

ORKNEY HERALD. Migratory blackcap in song in Shetland (June 10). Report of Dr. Jakobsen's lectures on "Old Norse Philology" in Aberdeen University (June 10, 17). Archæological discovery: A cist has been found by Mr. John Aim, Blows, Dearness, while ploughing a field, and on the top of what is alleged to be a large igneous mound, the neck of a volcano surrounded by a lava outflow. This mound, which is called the Howan of Blows, was in its natural state, fifty years ago, covered with heather and grass. This is the fourth cist which has been found in the mound, since it was brought under cultivation, and measures 2' 10" × 1' 8" × 1' 3" deep; beneath one of the bottom stones was another small cist, 1' 7" × 1' × 9" deep, containing calcined bone; at right angles to the upper cist and separated from it by a single stone, another cist was found, 2' 6" × 1' 2" × 1' 3" deep. The axis of the larger cists extended from north-east (June 17). "Some incidents in the lives of the Dearness family." by Wm. Dearness, Milwaukee (June 3).

SHETLAND NEWS. "Mansie's Röd," is continued in the Shetland dialect.



HERMENNES : * HERMUNDAR-NEŠ : BURRAFIRTH, UNST.

From the original water-colour drawing by George Richardson in Dr. Edward Charlton's "Visit to Shetland," 1832.

Old-lore Miscellany

OF

ORKNEY, SHETLAND, CAITHNESS AND SUTHERLAND.

VOL. VII.

PART IV.

OCT., 1914.

NOTES.

ORKNEY AND SHETLAND IN NEW ZEALAND.—“The Orkney and Shetland Association of Otago and Southland” was started at the beginning of the year, and is the first society of its kind in New Zealand. At a recent meeting Dr. Pottinger gave an illustrated lecture on Orkney and Shetland. During a conversazione, which followed, a parcel of hard sillocks was distributed and highly appreciated. Among the names of the members may be mentioned: Messrs. W. A. Stout, Stevenson of Gore, Brass, Nicholson, Seatter, Georgeson and Mullan. The Hon. Secretary is Mr. R. Sinclair, Land and Deeds Registry, Invercargill, Southland, N.Z.

OPAH OR KING FISH IN SHETLAND.—The *Shetland Times*, August 1st and 15th, reports the capture of this rare fish by Cullivoe fishermen, and another landed at Sandwick, Whalsey. “The opah is a rare visitor in northern waters, his home being in the seas of the West Indies and South America. A few years ago a much larger specimen was landed at Uyeasound.”

SWALLOWS IN SHETLAND.—The *Shetland Times*, August 1st, reports a pair of swallows having been seen at Bridge of Bayanne, with a nest, full of young, built under the bridge. It is unusual for swallows to nest in Shetland, especially so late in the year.

BIGGINGS.—It was quite common in Orkney, at one time, for a number of farmhouses to be grouped together,¹ the buildings being so close and intermixed that it was impossible for a stranger to distinguish which belonged to the different holdings. Frequently the ground farmed was a long distance from these buildings. The custom is said to have been adopted for mutual assistance, as, in bygone days, freebooters frequently made raids; might being right, and the law difficult to enforce. These buildings were called “Biggings,” and, besides the farmhouses, they included smaller buildings, termed “chaumers,”² where sometimes old women resided, who helped as they were able, or attended to the children, etc. Many farmhouses still have the term “bigging” attached to them, such as Netherbigging, Over and Upper Bigging, Norbigging, East Bigging, etc. The system, however, had its disadvantages, as near proximity made it difficult to keep clear of each other with regard to animals, etc., which frequently led to quarrels, when mutual forbearance was not exercised. At present farmhouses are placed as far apart as possible and to suit the land under cultivation. There are still a few to be seen of the old style, and perhaps none illustrates the same better than the Biggings of Stove and Quoyloo in Sandwick. These are quite near each other, and at one time comprised the buildings for three good-sized farms with their “chaumers,” of which the occupants formed a small village. Although portions have been modernised, much of the old buildings remain, such as long closes, kilns, and kailyards, which are nearly the height

¹ Corresponding with the Shetland township.—ED.

² The term “chamber,” as applied to a small house (of one chamber?), appears to be peculiar to Orkney. In Eng., Sco. (chalmer) and Irel. it is applied to a bedroom, usually on the upper floor, and not to a separate cottage. The Orkney “chamber” cannot be derived from the corresponding word in ON., *kamarr*, which means (1) a privy, (2) human excrement, (3) a narrow passage between two hill-sides. ON. *kamarr* = *garð-hús*, a privy.—ED.



OLD CAITHNESS KITCHEN CHAIR.

of the old dwelling-house.—WM. SMITH, Newark, Sandwick.

A CAITHNESS KITCHEN CHAIR AND AN INSTANCE OF *Corp-cré* IN SUTHERLAND.—This rustic kitchen chair belonged to Adam Gunn, tacksman of Mulbuie, Houstry, Dunbeath. It was evidently home-made, and from birchwood, which could have been conveniently obtained from the Strath of Dunbeath.

Adam Gunn was a man of considerable local standing in his day. He was an important member of the Kirk-Session of Latheron, and treasurer and collector of the Session fines for the west side of the parish. He was also frequently employed as an arbitrator in the settlement of disputes among his neighbours.

One of the numerous occurrences of his name in the Session Records of Latheron is in connexion with a petition by himself and Hugh Gow, Culvad, complaining of the conduct of James Sinclair, proprietor of Dunbeath, whom they accused of living on terms of undue intimacy with his housekeeper, and praying the Session to compel him to part with her. The case, after occupying the attention of the Session for some time, was finally disposed of by the Presbytery in a decision favourable to the proprietor, and censuring Adam Gunn and Hugh Gow for bringing forward so serious a charge without sufficient grounds for it. The proprietor was so pleased with the decision that he bestowed an annual gift of meal on the Session for the benefit of the poor of the parish. This was in 1762.

Adam Gunn had two sons, who became parish ministers, Robert and William. The means by which Robert obtained an early classical education to fit him for a university course, is revealed in the documents connected with a local law case in 1766 in which Robert appeared as witness. He was, at that time, eighteen years of age, and was living in the family of John Sinclair, advocate, younger of Freswick, sheriff of

Caithness, who had purchased the estate of Dunbeath shortly before this time. Robert Gunn was living in this family for the purpose of being "a constant attender on Mr. Sinclair's son . . . both when he is at his education and amusement." The tutor who taught the sheriff's son was "William Rutherford, preacher of the gospel, aged twenty-three years." Robert got the benefit of the tutor's instructions along with Mr. Sinclair's son. On the death of Mr. James Brodie, minister of Latheron, Robert, son of Adam Gunn, was presented to the living by Major-General John Scott, and was ordained on 27th September, 1775. Robert Gunn was married three times. His first wife was Mary Henderson, daughter of David Henderson of Stemster, his second Louisa Clunes, Cracaig, Sutherland, and his third was Elizabeth Gunn, Forres.

Robert Gunn was a shrewd, legally-minded man, with much force of character, but not very popular as a preacher. On one occasion "Freswick," proprietor of Dunbeath, sent his proportion of the minister's stipend to him in grain. Mr. Gunn refused to accept it on the ground that the grain was not up to standard weight, that it was, in fact, refuse, known locally as "tails." Freswick, who was notoriously eccentric, and could be truculent on occasion, justified himself by saying that the minister fed their souls with "tails," and why should not he feed his body with "tails." Robert Gunn was often at law with his heritors, and on this account got the nick-name of "Robbie-na-process." Perhaps his early association with the sheriff gave him the litigious bias. It was related, traditionally, that if Robert Gunn of Latheron and William Sutherland of Wick were seen together on the street of Wick, every laird in Caithness would tremble in his shoes. The concoction of processes was the anticipated dread. Robert Gunn died on 29th November, 1819, about seventy years of age.

William Gunn, his brother, was, in his student days, parish schoolmaster of Latheron and Session Clerk. He is mentioned as follows in a Session minute of Latheron, dated 16th April, 1769:—"This day William Gunn, schoolmaster, took charge of the school and Session minutes, and says that he took the burden of the school and everything else of his late depute, George McDougall's hands, and it's acknowledgment that all the glass of the windows are entire excepting one lozen . . . and both the doors have sufficient locks and keys. The Session will be very happy the schoolmaster's continuing amongst them, and whenever there can be as good an appointment in one to supply his charge as they had lately they will gladly indulge him in the prosecution of his studies." George McDougall acted as Mr. Gunn's substitute from 20th August, 1768, to 16th April, 1769.

William Gunn graduated at Aberdeen in 1771. Then he became parish schoolmaster of Tongue. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Tongue on 24th October, 1774. He was presented to the parish of Golspie by the tutors of Elizabeth, Countess of Sutherland, in February, and was ordained 15th August, 1776. He married 9th July, 1779, Anne Henderson, daughter of David Henderson, of Stemster, and sister to the wife of his brother Robert. William Gunn died on 28th December, 1785, at about the age of 34. His widow survived him 56 years. He was highly esteemed by the godly people of the north as a powerful evangelical preacher, and as a saintly character. His death was long and deeply lamented, and Gaelic elegies were composed to express the deeply-felt and widespread sorrow. Strange, weird stories, illustrative of the credulities of that time, were told in connexion with his death. The parish of Golspie, in common with most other parishes in the north, were said to be infested with witches. Mr. Gunn was zealous in his

endeavours to discredit and suppress them. They brought about his death by means of a *Corp-cré*. The *Corp-cré*¹ was a clay effigy of him, made by the witches, and concealed in some place where the wasting influences of the atmosphere would have access to it. As this image would be wasting away by the action of the wind and rain, a corresponding waste would be going on in the person that it was meant to represent, and this waste would terminate in the death of that person.

Adam Gunn had a daughter, Ann, who married Alexander Campbell, son of William Campbell, Ousdale. The marriage took place on 15th June, 1757. The late Capt. Gunn, Braehour, says, in a letter to the *Northern Ensign*, dated October 28th, 1896: "The issue of this marriage was Sir William Campbell, Chief Justice of Upper Canada." Adam Gunn had another daughter, Janet, who married John Finlayson, merchant, Achvar, Clyth, on 25th April, 1768. After the death of his father-in-law, John Finlayson had Mulbuie for a short time.

In a Session meeting, dated August 18th, 1773, there is an entry to the effect that the money was received for two hires for the velvet mortcloth to Braemore, and also for the mortcloth for Adam Gunn. This shows that he died in 1773.—GEORGE SUTHERLAND, U.F. Manse, Bruan, August, 1914.

¹ Gaelic, *Corp-criadhach*, clay corpse. When a witch desired to destroy anyone to whom she had an ill-will, she often made a corpse of clay resembling the unfortunate one, and placed it in some out-of-the-way burn under a precipice, in such a way that the water trickled slowly on it. As the clay body wasted, so the live body of the person it resembled was also supposed to waste away. Were the body found, it was carefully preserved, and so the spell of the witch was broken. Sometimes pins were stuck in the clay body to make the death of the doomed one more painful. Several such bodies have been found, even of late years. E. Macdonald's *Gaelic Dict.* Particulars of this old and common form of magic will be found in Grimm's *Teutonic Mythology*, Lond. 1888, pp. 1073, 1092, 1628.—Editor.

QUERY.

MANS NORSK.—Can any reader give definite information of the ancestry and early history of Mans Norsk, minister of Unst, 1593-1632? According to the late Mr. Arthur Laurenson, of Lerwick, a descendant, he was vicar of Yell in 1590, and his name was Magnus Manson.—J. SHAND.

Mr. Mons Norsk was minister of Yell in 1586 (see *Orkney and Shetland Records*, I., 207).—ED.

A VISIT TO SHETLAND IN 1832.

(From the *Journal of Edward Charlton, M.D.*)

XII.

(Continued from p. 131, *ante*).

UNST (continued).

Monday, August 20th (continued).—Set off after breakfast for Hillside, and was kindly received there by the minister, Mr. Ingram, who manages to pack a large family into a small but well-built manse. Having again breakfasted, I went on to Scaw and examined the north-eastern point of the island from Scaw to the end of Norwick bay, returning home at 9 p.m. Mr. Ingram had kindly lent me a pony to reach the northern point of the island, and I was accompanied by his son John, whom I have since again had the pleasure of meeting in Edinburgh.¹ On the north of Norwick bay the porphyritic gneiss has been hollowed out into a vast chasm, communicating by an arch with the sea, and which derives its name of Saxe's Kettle, from a monstrous story of a giant of that name who resided upon Saxaford Hill,² and used this, his kettle, to boil the whales that

¹ Rev. John Ingram, born 1808, died 1892.

² Saxavord, ON. **Saxa-varða*, *Saxi*, a man's name, and *varða* a cairn on the top of a hill.

served him for his daily repast. During stormy weather the sea boils up with tremendous noise and in vast sheets of foam through this leaky culinary vessel. The legendary history of this doughty hero is yet rife in Shetland. I here give it, as nearly as possible in the way it is related in Unst by the fishermen: "Ya, see lamm, dat dere wis i da laing gyen time, a grit gēant liven o da top of Saxefjord. He wis a crūell mann, and kilt da peable i da kintra, and dey wis forced to hide in da helyers¹ att wis too eng² for ham to get his boady in toie, for he wis grit in boady as he wis cruill in da soull. Dan wis Saxe hungert and he puit his buidy³ o his back and a paikie o' tows i da other haand, and he gieng to da great haaf⁴ for fish. Now, o da ither side of Burrafiord, dere wis anōther gēant, grit in boady and crūill in da soul, as wis himself Saxe, and him called dey Hermand. Dere is a grit helyer on da west side of Hermanness where he livet, and dere, hided he, all de 'combustibles' dat cam toie his haand. But, de two gēants so feared de peables o' da kintra, dat dey most all leavit de land of Unst. Dann tuik Hermand his buidy too, and wid dat de mast o' ane grit schīp, dat was wreckit o da Holm of Scaw, and he steppit out onto da Skerries o' Hermanness, and sets him to da fishin, juist as wir Magnus wud ging to da voe, o da aften,⁵ for his sillocks⁶ for supper. But da sillocks wis no Herman's meat. I dese laing gyen times, de quhails⁷ wis mainy o da cuist, and dere came it, by grit guid fortune, dat dere was one dead, com in upōn da Skerries, where sat himself Hermann. And he tuik da stour-fisk⁸ to da top of da Ness o' Hermaness, where wis da top hole o' da helyer, but he fand no kettle to boil da whale in. Now Saxe druv well da whales indtil

¹ ON. *helliv*, a cave. ² ON. *engr*, *öngr*, adj., narrow. ³ A straw basket, cf. Isl. *budda*, a purse, ON. *buðkr*, a box, *bytta*, a pail.

⁴ ON. *haf*, the sea. ⁵ ON. *aptan*, *aftan*, evening. ⁶ Young coal-fish, ON. *silungr*, a trout, Isl. *upsi*, coal-fish. ⁷ ON. *hvalr*, pl. *hvalar*, whales.

⁸ ON. *stór-fiskr*, pl. *-fiskar*, big fish (whales).

Norwick bay, and dere built he a grit kettle for to boil dem in. Dan says Hermann to Saxe and hailit him over da fiord: 'Lend wis da kaitle, lamm, for ane day.' 'Yaw,' said Saxe, 'but ye skal gif me de haif o' da quhail.' 'N' yaw, dat will I not,' said Hermann, and Saxe wis mickle angrit at him and he at Saxe. Dann tuik up Hermann da grit stane dat is now de baa¹ of Hermann in Burrafiord, and he cuist it at Saxe, but it stopt in da way, and fell into da firth, and dere is always a hantle of brak² upon him in de finest wather. Dann did Saxe cuist a grit stane at Hermann, but dat fell to upon da banks, and rollit into da sea, and dat is now de baa of Saxe. And no man can tell how dese two cruill men died, for some, till dis day, have seed dem o da Ness at Yule, and dere is no man will bide upon Saxefiord Hill for da night.'³

Tuesday, August 21st.—Called at Bunes and met there with Dr. Edmondston, a well-informed man, but who appears sadly out of his element there. He accompanied us to Balta island, and thence to Swinanes, but I got so thoroughly drenched with rain that I could not remain to dine at Bunes, as he had wished.

Wednesday, August 22nd.—At 11, I went to Woodwick on the western coast of Unst, to procure specimens of minerals for which the locality is famed. Dined this afternoon at Hammer, the residence of Mr. Spence,⁴ and was much amused by the simple, hospitable manners of the amiable ladies of the house, who had never been out of Shetland. This evening I received a seal from Mr. Edmondston of Bunes, and also some fine specimens from Mr. Spence of Hammer.

¹ ON. *boði*, a breaker caused by a sunken rock, hence applied to the rock. ² Eng. Sc. Irel., a considerable amount of water breaking.

³ For another account of this legend see 'The Home of a Naturalist,' by Rev. Biot Edmondston and Jessie M. E. Saxby, 1888, pp. 225-6.

⁴ Gilbert Spence of Hammer, died 1850, m. (1) 1828, Christian, daughter of Rev. James Ingram (2) 1844, Jane, daughter of Wm. Spence of Greenfield. (Grant.)

Thursday, August 23rd.—Mr. W. Ingram¹ accompanied me to Burrafiord. We rowed down the beautiful Loch of Cliff, which only wants trees to render it equal to English lake scenery. Mr. Ingram left me at the north end of the lake, and having geologised from Hermanness to Saxafiord, I returned alone by the lake, rowing the boat back to whence we took it. Great was the astonishment of the Shetlanders to see the Englishman pulling himself along the loch. In the evening I went down to Bunness and found that the seal was skinned, and then having listened to some most wonderful exploits in seal shooting, and having viewed him in his seal-skin dress, I returned to Hillside.

AN ORKNEY TOWNSHIP BEFORE THE DIVISION OF THE COMMONTY.

XVI.

BY JOHN FIRTH, Finstown.

(Concluded from p. 122, *ante*).

The writer's grandmother often recounted the exciting circumstances attending a funeral procession which she, in her girlhood, witnessed passing through Redland. The districts of Redland and Settiscarth were always spoken of as *erseland*,² and by virtue of this union it was the bounden duty of the men in one

¹ Son of Rev. Jas. Ingram, born 1812, died unmarried. (Grant.)

² It has been suggested that *erseland* = Orkney *urisland*, ON., *eyrisland*, land paying an *eyrir* or ounce of rent. In Orkney 1 *eyrisland* = 18 pennylands; so that Settiscarth, 3d. land, and Redland, 6d. land = 9d. land or $\frac{1}{2}$ *eyrisland*. It may, however, have been used to mean a district or township; but it is more probable that *erseland* is derived from ON. *erfi*, an arval or funeral feast, from which may have been formed the word **erfisland* (> **ervisland* > **eruisland* > **erisland* > *erseland*), the district of which the inhabitants had to attend an *erfi*. In Shetland, *leek* (ON., *lik*, a corpse), is applied to such a district. (See Vol. I., 273). In ON. *lik-færsla*, *lik-flutning*, carrying a body to church, *lik-fylgia*, funeral procession; gild-brothers and hirðmenn had to attend the funerals of their fellow members under penalty.—Ed.

district to attend all funerals in the other. This was a custom of long standing, and tradition had it that it was brought about by a severe famine which these islands suffered from in the year 1745. So intense were the privations of the people that great numbers died, and the survivors were so much reduced in strength that the men of separate townships were unable to carry their dead to the graveyard, hence the union of two or three townships into an *erseland*. But this bond of union did not maintain good comradeship on a certain occasion, for as the narrator put it, "The men were a' primed wi' smuggled gin as weel as home-brewed ale," and the combination excited in them the spirit of combativeness. With contentions and wrangling they slowly wended their way across the breck of Lyde, and as they passed through the township of Redland the quarrel waxed still fiercer. But the climax came at the well of Gimuglo, where the men set down the coffin, stripped off their coats, "and gaed in a hecked teullyo"¹ (a real hand-to-hand fight), the men of one district pitted against those of the other. After a few rounds the adversaries, in a more amicable frame of mind, took up the bier and marched on to the burial ground in Firth Churchyard. Of a different type was the funeral of another parishioner, whose remains were carried to Rendall for interment. When the body had been laid to rest in Rendall Churchyard, the men, instead of turning their steps homeward, bethought themselves of Tammy Halcro's famous ale-house at Hogarth, and, betaking themselves thither, they drank and danced the whole winter evening and on until the morning's clear light. One of the witnesses of this carousal, then a boy of thirteen, who had been brought to the place by an elder brother, told how he sat cowering in a corner of the ale-house, shocked at their unbecoming mirth, and afraid to go home in the darkness. This circumstance

¹ Ork. *heck*, to grab, Scot. *tuilyie*, a quarrel—a hand to hand fight.—Ed.

so much affected his sense of propriety that from that time onwards he abstained from all feasting and mirth with the rigidity of a Nazarene. One cannot say whether the undertaker or the mourners were the more at fault in the case where the bottom of the coffin fell out when the company were nearing the kirk green. One sympathises with their feeling of horror when the dead body became exposed to view, and the men hastily threw down the coffin and ran away in abject terror. But after a little consideration their better sense prevailed, and, turning the coffin bottom up, they placed the body in it, and resumed their sad task.

When meal and malt were abundant it was a usual thing for the nearest neighbours, or even the whole company to be invited back to the house of mourning for another repast; and it was here that the greatest abuse came in, for, like the Israelites of old, they forgot the solemn occasion of their meeting, and "The people sat down to eat and to drink and rose up to play." The auld man o' Gue was an expert on the violin, and at Jamie o' Barm's funeral the ale so roused his musical faculties that he called to the boys to run to Gue for his fiddle, and he "wad play them a good reel." The boys readily obeyed, but his wife, seeing the impropriety of such conduct, withheld the fiddle.

Despite the seeming absence of reverence from the funeral ceremonies, the name of the departed, if ever mentioned, was uttered with bated breath. The custom was to say, "Him 'at's awa noo," or, "Shu 'at was ta'en"; and, if the Christian name were expressed, it was followed by, "Lord, forgae me for spakin' o' the dead." If any anecdote concerning a deceased friend was to be told, and his words quoted, there was always the preface, "Best forgae me for spakin' aifter the dead," and then the telling of the story would follow quite unconcernedly. Recently a widow was observed to refer to her departed husband in the enigmatical

phrase, "Whit was here." On being asked why she did not use even the personal pronoun, she explained that to speak of a dead friend was risky, as it would bring up his ghost. Fear of the ghost, rather than reverence for the dead, was often the controlling principle in the good people's conduct, it would appear.

Regarding the custom of drinking at funerals, it is a matter for profound thankfulness that "Old times have changed, old manners gone." It is about forty years since the practice began to fall into disuse in the parish of Firth. This reform was brought about by the earnest recommendations and personal example of the clergymen of the parish. At first the innovation was looked upon with much disfavour, but so strong was the influence of those gentlemen, and so great the persistence with which they urged the cause, that gradually the custom fell into disuse, and a good many years ago was entirely abolished. To show how strong was the hold these drinking habits had upon the people, it may be mentioned that an elder of the church, who at first strongly advocated the abolition movement, failed when his opportunity came to set an example. He argued with the reverend gentlemen that people might be hungry, and if no refreshment were offered at the funeral he would be thought mean. When the ministers so far condoned the practice as to suggest the use of wine instead of stronger liquor, his reply was, "There's naething folk like better or whisky, for hid mak's them herty." A certain woman, formerly well known in this neighbourhood, often boasted that her father's dying words were to put up a Welsh headstone for him, and have plenty of good whisky at the funeral. The latter order was strictly complied with, but the former has not yet been attended to.

DISEASE.

Despite all that may be said or sung about "the good old times," statistics show that the times were not

really so good as they are now; the death-rate was much higher, and the primitive life then lived did not favour longevity. Possibly the people of those times, inured as they were to such hardships as are now unknown, were constitutionally stronger than present-day folk; and in their struggle for a bare subsistence they endured without murmur such discomfort and privation as would send many of the present pampered generation to an early grave. But in the early advance of old age, and in the long drawn out decline which was the general lot of all who reached middle life, little ground is afforded for characterising the times as good. Very few who reached the age of sixty or seventy retained the vitality now enjoyed by persons of that age. In the township of Redland there were several people who, notwithstanding their freedom from any specific disease, were bed-ridden for years before their death, and who were spoken of as "puir auld bodies," though their years were little over three score. An auld young man and an "auld young lass" were the common but contradictory epithets applied to unmarried persons over thirty, an age at which the bachelors and spinsters of seventy years ago adopted a staid, douce, and elderly deportment, in striking contrast to that of the present generation, who at the same age indulge in games and athletics with the gay agility of adolescence.

The varied forms of disease were not classified then as they are now-a-days: there is little doubt, however, but that they existed. The meagre means of existence and its frequent insufficiency, combined with the shocking insanitary condition of most homes, tended to engender and propagate diseases of the most loathsome type. The greatest scourge of that time was small-pox, and so common was it that there were few families in which the comeliness of some countenance was not marred with pock-marks. On account of its so frequent recurrence, small-pox was regarded as an unavoidable

and almost inevitable evil, and for this reason, if the outbreak promised to be of a mild type, infection was courted. A prevailing custom of the times was for people to borrow and wear underclothing and blankets which had been used by those suffering from this malady. But a yet more revolting method of contracting the disease was sometimes adopted. The scab or desiccated pus of the pox taken from the diseased person was inserted with butter between the folds of bere-bread, which was then unwittingly partaken of by the young people whom it was desired to have infected. The amount of pain and discomfort endured by the patient was almost inconceivable, especially as the doctor's advice was seldom sought, and there were few home remedies available for the alleviation of suffering, because of the prevailing poverty and ignorance.

A very common result of small-pox was blindness, but as this could not be prevented by any empirical treatment it was submitted to as inevitable. The chief concern appears to have been the preservation of the complexion; and to prevent the pitting of the skin by the sores a wash of tripe bree was administered, but the efficacy of such treatment was purely imaginary, for all those in Redland district who survived "the pox" were deeply marked. Whisky and sulphur were the only internal medicines given, so that recovery depended chiefly on the strength of the patient's constitution.

Typhus fever was another very prevalent epidemic, but, unlike small-pox, it was not sought after; indeed, the stricken house was shunned to such an extent that the inmates frequently suffered severe privations through the callous conduct of their friends and neighbours. In spite of all the precaution taken to avoid the fever, its spread in a township, where the houses were not closely crowded together as they are in the slums of a large town, and where the inhabitants

could freely breathe the air pure and fresh from the hillside and far from city's smoke, was nevertheless very rapid. In his long protracted recovery from typhus the sufferer had few comforts to soothe his fever-racked frame, and nothing to assuage the thirst but "a drink o' blathoo"¹ (new churn-milk) or "a speunfu' o' raw sowans." Of appetizers and pick-me-ups there were none, and when a drink of hot butter-milk, or a bowl of boiled milk and meal—oatmeal and butter-milk just merely brought to the boiling point—or boiled sowans, or milk-gruel were the only varieties of invalid food obtainable, one does not wonder that recovery was tardy. This fever, now happily almost unknown in country places, was then a fearful scourge, sometimes carrying off the majority of the people in a household.

In bringing this sketch to a close, the writer would remark that when he began it he had no intention of making it so lengthy, but, after an instalment or two had appeared, several readers urged him to continue his reminiscences, because, in the course of another generation, all knowledge of such facts would be lost, if not put on record by one having experience of them.

NOTES FROM THE TONGUE PRESBYTERY RECORDS.

IV.

(Continued from p. 115, *ante.*)

8th October, 1744.—At Tongue. Mr. Ross reported that in connection with the appeal of the Presbytery of Tongue against decision of Synod recalling licence of Mr. Robert Munro that the Assembly referred the case to their Commission. That the Commission

¹Gælic, *blàthach*, buttermilk. This word, *blatho*, was also used in Stronsey, as reported by the late Mr. Joseph Halcro, Brek, Orphir.—Ed.

declared the Synod's sentence void and are highly dissatisfied with Synod and appoint them to be rebuked at the bar. It was recommended to the Presbytery of Tongue to be more observant of Acts of Assembly in licensing young men.

Mr. Walter Ross further reported that he found no room to seek for an itinerant preacher in regard that the Committee for Royal Bounty were strongly impressed that they did not deal well with Mr. Roderick Mac-Lennan the last itinerant sent them. He reported that John, son of Donald Happy, was appointed schoolmaster and catechist for this parish; and Donald MacKay and Augus MacKay are continued in their posts in Durness and Eddrachillis.

20th April, 1745.—At Tongue. The Presbytery considering that there is a year and a half's stipends of the parish of Eddrachillis since the death of Mr. George Brodie late minister there until the admission of Mr. John Munro present minister did therefore agree to address the Exchequer with concurrence of Lord Reay for a gift of said vacancies for pious uses.

9th July, 1745.—At Tongue. A paper was presented written by the Synod Clerk dated Dornoch, 27th June last, bearing that as there was no report concerning Mr. Skeldoch's affair viz. his tacks etc. from this Presbytery and that the Synod was audibly informed that Mr. Skeldoch did last summer order his subtenants in Soar to give their cattle to Charles Gordon his factor and that if they gave them to any other they did so at their risk and that the people obeyed. Mr. Gordon having met with misfortune so that he is not able to pay Mr. Skeldoch demanded payment of the tenants and that they refusing the said Mr. Skeldoch demanded payment commencing a process against them before the sheriff-depute; that they plead for themselves that they had paid to his factor by his order and ought to be discharged. That upon some difficulties casting up in the

process he, by ways and means, compromised the matter with the tenants by an underhand bargain. That the Synod are of opinion that this method is oppressive; that Mr. Skeldoch seems to be obstinately determined to entangle himself with worldly affairs and to have no regard to the command of the judicatories.¹

The Presbytery appoint that the next meeting be held at this place on third Wednesday of October next.

25th December, 1745.—At Tongue. The Presbytery could not meet at the time appointed because of the badness of the weather and the troubles in the nation. The brethren by correspondence agreed to meet at this time.

The Presbytery consider the present melancholy state of the nation by reason of an unnatural rebellion raging in its bounds and considers the approved and known good conduct of the Right Hon. the Earl of Loudon and the Lord President of the Court of Session in managing His Majesty's affairs in North of Scotland and an occasion now offering to Inverness where their Lordships are at this time by a company of our countrymen under the command of the Hon. Captain George MacKay, son of Lord Reay, for His Majesty's Service, judged it their duty to signify our sense of their Lordships' good conduct and accordingly the same in a letter directed to the Earl of Loudon care of said Capt. MacKay.

¹ Even Rev. Murdo MacDonald who did not hesitate to characterise Mr. Skeldoch's accusers in 1737 as so "malicious that their indignation and revenge are more and more whetted by every new disappointment," had at length to say:—"I have been this man's friend, while it was possible for me to do so, consistently with charity and honesty . . . [but] when I find him continually involving himself in things that common prudence might make him shun, nay, when his worldly mindedness breaks out in such glaring instances, as might even be reckoned faulty in a laick [layman], and all this in opposition to the warmest admonitions to the contrary from myself and others privately and publicly, I must in all likelihood change sides."—*Trans. Gaelic Soc. Inverness*, xi., 308, 9.

12th March, 1746.—At Tongue. It is reported to the Presbytery that nothing can be done in affair of vacant stipends of Eddrachillis because of the continued troubles. The Presbytery adjourns to meet on 2nd Wednesday of April.

17th July, 1746.—At Thurso. The Presbytery met after the Synod. It was reported that the April meeting could not be held because of the continued troubles.

The Presbytery drew up an address to the Duke of Cumberland which is engrossed in the minutes.

27th October, 1746.—At Durness. Mr. MacDonald reports that he had spoken to Mrs. Brodie (widow of the former minister) who refused to accept of proposed gratuities. No Commissioners went to last General Assembly because of the national troubles.

The Presbytery resolved to meet at Farr on 2nd Wednesday of March and Mr. Skeldoch is ordered to give timeous warning to all in his parish to attend said meeting in order to inquire into some affairs relative to himself and recommended to this Presbytery by the Synod.

18th March, 1747.—At Tongue. The Presbytery could not meet on the 11th current because of Mr. Ross's absence there being no quorum exclusive of Mr. Skeldoch.

The Presbytery decide that Patrick MacDonald being presently in the family of Sir John Gordon of Embo could not go to College this session as the burse did not answer. A letter was written to the Presbytery of Dornoch that they make trial of said young man which was accordingly done.

[*29th April, 1747.*—In their report to the Synod the Presbytery say that they took into consideration the alleged undue usage of the tenants of Sayar (Syre) and Kennacail by Mr. Skeldoch mentioned in the last Synod's fourth Refer to this Presbytery. The following witnesses were called:—Alexander Gordon,

William McEanicuilliamoig, Hugh McUilliamicagu, William McUrchoig, William McOalvicolicinnaish, William Gun, Angus McEanicuilliamoig, Alexander Mcurchie, John Gun.¹

The following questions were put to them upon oath:—(1) Did Mr. Skeldoch actually wrong you or yours in your interest at any time. (2) Did Mr. Skeldoch order you to give your cattle to Charles Gordon, tacksman of Skelpick, as rent belonging to him in the year 1744 that said Charles lost by his drove. (3) Did Mr. Skeldoch demand payment of you for cattle you gave Charles Gordon that year. (4) Did Mr. Skeldoch at the Court of Clibrig or any other place attempt to cause you or any others to your knowledge pay again the cattle which the said Charles got at Mr. Skeldoch's alleged desire. The Presbytery after hearing the witnesses at great length decided to refer the whole matter to the Synod to which Mr. Skeldoch also sent a Memorial in his own defence. In addition to the above meeting of Presbytery to deal with this case there were other meetings and the Presbytery spent much time in dealing with this troublesome affair.]

SYNOD'S SENTENCE.

[At the meeting of Synod (1747) "the Presbytery of Tongue made report of their enquiry anent Mr. Skeldoch's oppressing or attempting to oppress the tennents of Seir. In which enquiry it appears probable that Mr. Skeldoch did oppress or attempt to oppress said tennents. (1) Because it appears from several joint declarations, together with Charles Gordon's declaration, that the people gave their cattle by Mr. Skeldoch's orders to the drover who they had reason to believe was his factor still. (2) Because upon the drover's failing he demanded the price of the cattle from the

¹ For the actual Gaelic forms of these names and their English equivalents, see *Old Lore Miscellany*, V., 100.

tennants. And (3) Because his not succeeding in that way the tennants were, somehow or other, cited at his instance before a Sheriff Court held at Clibrig to cause them repeat for Mr. Skeldoch's behoof the prices of the cattle given to the drover. And (4) Because Mr. Skeldoch who was present at said Court did not disclaim their being prosecuted at his instance, by declaring his disapprobation of putting the people to trouble and charges on his account. (5) Because the Sherriff did not decreet the tennants tho it's said he threaten'd them with a decreet. And (6) Because the people were actually put to unnecessary expences by his default, in defending themselves against the prosecution intended at the minister's instance. And (7) Because upon the intended decreets not being passed the minister attempted afterwards to impetrate the prices from the tennants by underhand dealing by offering to compromise matters with them. From all which facts there appear strong presumptions that Mr. Skeldoch suffered them to be opprest and attempted further to oppress them himself by endeavouring to impetrate money from the tennants again that had been formerly payed to his order. For the above reasons the Committee are of opinion that it is become necessary for Mr. Skeldoch's credit and the common interest of the ministry that his Presbytery should lybel him before themselves and allow him all the legal means of exculpation for clearing himself if innocent or censure him according to his demerit if found guilty of the undue usages complained of. And furthermore what seems to make this course necessary and expedient is because it has appeared to the Synod by Mr. Skeldoch his own acknowledgement of his dealing with Strathie for more grass, or liberty to his cattle to pasture on Strathie's grass, that his worldly mindedness continues still, and that he is determind to follow his own worldly inclinations and views in contempt of his people and the judicatories

to which he immediately belongs. And because he concealed the concern he now appears to have in Borgiebeg when he declared he had no other lands but what had been allowed him by his Presbytery. It's true he explains his concern in said town to be only as cautioner for the possessors but even that must entangle him and his disingenuity is too presumable from his concealing it formerly from his brethren. And though he has given in a Memorial by his procurators explaining his conduct and the reasons thereof the memorialist has not given any tolerable account of Mr. Skeldoch's conduct and the letter produced yesterday from some tacksmen and others of his people being considered by the Committee they did not think it sufficient to invalidate the declarations against Mr. Skeldoch as it was ultroneous and the testimony contained in it not taken up in a regular way. The Synod approved of the Committee's recommendations and Mr. Skeldoch appealed to the Assembly. (Synod Register)].

[15th July, 1748.—At Thurso. At this Synod it was reported that Mr. Skeldoch had dropt his appeal and the Synod proceeded to deal with his case and after much reasoning Mr. Skeldoch was suspended from the exercise of his ministerial functions from 15th July to 15th September, 1748. Mr. Skeldoch, so runs the minute, "being called in this was intimated to him and he was suitably exhorted." (Synod Register)].

15th August, 1748.—At Badcall in Eddrachillis. The brethren of this Presbytery represented that it was not convenient for the Presbytery to meet according to last adjournment and that they had no quorum after the rising of the last Synod by reason that Mr. Skeldoch had been suspended by them and Mr. MacDonald sick.

[Mr. Ross represented that he in obedience to the Synod had gone to the Kirk of Farr on 24th July last in order to preach and intimate the Synod's sentence

on Mr. Skeldoch when he found the doors locked. For rest of his report see under Synod of 1749.]

2nd March, 1749.—At Tongue. “The Presbytery being weel apprised that there are in the several parishes some who take upon themselves to read the Scriptures and other books in the Irish language to the people and to solve doubts and cases of conscience at such meetings and that some of them are without the authority or allowance of the minister of the parish, and that it is to be feared that such as so officiate are not weel qualified for it and the Presbytery remembering a melancholy scene that happened several years ago in one of these unauthorised meetings at Halmadary¹; did and hereby do prohibit any to convene the people to reading or conferences except the advice and consent of the parish minister be obtained, and if any think this a hardship, they are to apply to the Presbytery, who will give proper directions to them, and the several brethren are appointed to intimate this to their congregations, as they think most convenient.” The members of the Presbytery present were Messrs. Murdo MacDonald, Walter Ross and John Skeldoch.

[13th July, 1749.—At Dornoch. Mr. Walter Ross, Tongue, informed the Synod that while Mr. Skeldoch submitted to the Synod’s sentence that when he [Mr. Ross] went to Farr on Sabbath 24th July to intimate the Synod’s sentence of suspension “he found the kirk-doors locked and could get no access thereto and that on calling for the keys from the kirk-officer said officer told before a great many witnesses that Mr. MacKay younger of Strathy had some days before taken away the keys and further that he was credibly informed on his way to and from Far, that said Mr. McKay had ordered the ground officer of Far to discharge the

¹ A very full account of this extraordinary affair will be found in the *Trans. Gaelic Soc. Inverness*, XX., 99, from the pen of Rev. Neil Mackay, Croick, now minister of Strathy U.F. Church. See also Henderson’s *Norse Influence on Celtic Scotland*, p. 70.

people from hearing any other minister in that parish till their own minister should be allowed to preach to them. That according few of the people of the parish of Far came to publick worship the day he was there. That the congregation consisted mostly of the parish of Tongue. And that he was obliged to preach and to intimate the Synod's sentence in the church-yard having no access to the church." As a result of this information the opinion of the Procurator of the Church of Scotland was asked as to how the Synod might proceed against MacKay and the ground officer. (Synod Register.)]

[12th July, 1750.—At Thurso. At this diet of the Synod it was reported that the Procurator had given no opinion on the above case and that the Synod resolved to proceed no further against them. (Synod Register.)]

13th March, 1751.—At Tongue. "The Presbytery declare their resolution of keeping the Fast-day before the Sacrament on Friday and not on Thursday as it was last year at Durness only Mr. Skeldoch craved some time to converse with his people thereanent."

Memorial for the Synod of Caithness and Sutherland in order to answer the Remarks of the Assemblies' Committee in May, 1750, on their book.

[10th July, 1751. At Dornoch. *Inter alia*:—"Whilst the Synod were doubtful what resolution they had best take concerning this troublesome affair, Mr. John McKay, minister at Lairg, told the brethren that he was well informed of Mr. Sheldoch's having tacks or possessions of land from Lord Sutherland extending to more than double his whole stipend and of his oppressing his tennents in the town of Syer, by exacting from severals of the tennents in that town the rents of the year 1744 which had already been payed by cattle delivered by them according to his order, to Charles

Gordon, his factor. Mr. McKay represented further that Hugh McDonald, Sheriff-Clerk, who had been lately at a Court held in the highlands of Strathnaver concerning the affair between Mr. Skeldoch and his tennents could give the Synod a more particular information of the case if they judged it fit to call for him. The Synod unwilling to admit a complaint of this nature rashly against Mr. Skeldoch sent for the said Hugh MacDonald, afterwards Mr. Skeldoch's procurator, and he represented that he had good occasion to know the whole affair between Mr. Skeldoch and his tennents which was to this effect:—That about Martinmas, 1743, when Mr. Skeldoch was clearing accompts with those tennents he informed them that Charles Gordon, his father, intended to drive cattle next summer and that such of the tennents as gave their cattle to his factor and drover should have the price allowed in their next year's rent and bid them remember that he would not give them credit in their rents for any cattle that they should sell to any other drover. That in consequence of this the people had accordingly sold their cattle to Charles Gordon who having met with some misfortune had become unable to pay them; upon which Mr. Skeldoch unwilling to the loser himself, refused to give the tennents credit for the cattle they had sold by his order and the tennents refusing to pay to himself what they had payed to his factor were prosecuted for the same at their master's instance before a sherriff court held at Clibrick, which sherriff was at the same time Lord Sutherland's factor. As the said Hugh MacDonald was present in court the Synod could not doubt the truth of what he said and judging the case of too great importance to be delayed till the next ordinary meeting of Synod, which was twelve months thence, did judge it proper to appoint an interim meeting of Synod and accordingly appointed their next meeting to hold the ensuing September at

Thurso and appointed their Clerk to inform the Presbytery of Tongue and Mr. Skeldoch in particular of the time and design of the intended meeting at Thurso. But the Presbytery of Tongue having given it out that they would not attend an interim meeting appointed in their absence the members of the other two presbyteries saw it unnecessary for them to keep that appointment and so there was no interim meeting. At the Synod, 1746, the Presbytery of Tongue reported that they had had a meeting with Lord Sutherland's factor about Mr. Skeldoch's possessions and represented that Mr. Skeldoch had obtained a letter from My Lord, promising to take his tacks off his hands on certain conditions, excepting only so much as the Presbytery should judge to be necessary for his accommodation. It is uncertain whether Mr. Skeldoch performed those conditions on which My Lord proposed to free him of the incumbrances complained of, but the Synod had met with so many discouragements from the Presbytery of Tongue's disregarding their appointments and Mr. Skeldoch's shifting to answer directly to any question that was thought proper to bring forth the truth, that they appointed the Presbytery of Tongue only to take a precognition anent Mr. Skeldoch's oppressing his tenants in the town of Syer by demanding of them the rents that had been actually paid to his drover in cattle." (Synod Register).]

25th October, 1751.—At Farr. “The Presbytery had under consideration at this time the Acts of Assembly especially that of the last in joining the frequent administration of the Lord's Supper and being sensible that the present method of it in this country being once a year only in one parish services where all the communicants in the country usually convene is a manifest hindrance to the due frequency of that ordinance among them did judge it necessary that some change be made in the method of administration have

therefore resolved to instruct their commissioners to next Assembly to get such a change authorised as may facilitate the greater frequency of it."

14th September, 1752.—At Tongue. "Mr. Skeldoch presented a letter from Rev. Robert Cummine, Moderator of last Assembly bearing that the said Mr. Skeldoch had been very diligent to have a method authorised to facilitate the greater frequency of the Lord's Supper in the country but that tho' nothing could be done at this time yet if ministers agreed among themselves much might be done towards such a change."

12th October, 1753.—At Tongue. Reported that Mr. Skeldoch died 26th June last. A paper containing some Acts of S.P.C.K. was read prohibiting among other things their teachers attending the Presbytery as ruling elders.

20th March, 1754.—At Tongue. Mr. Murdo MacDonald reports that in pursuance of the Presbytery's conference at their last meeting to invite Mr. George Munro, probationer in Ross, in consequence of an invitation given him by the parish of Farr. He wrote for him and had for answer that he would come as soon as possible. Mr. MacDonald also reported that he got a paper called the Presentation subscribed by the Trustees of the Earl of Sutherland in favour of said Mr. Munro together with a letter of acceptance. He had consulted with Mr. Ross that after said Mr. Munro had preached and conversed in the parish of Farr for a competent time the said Mr. Ross should sound the minds of the people and if found to favour Mr. Munro Mr. Ross should moderate in a call.

Mr. Munro being on the ground was called and welcomed. His licence and testimonies from the Presbytery of Tain were inspected.

[*24th May, 1754.*—At Farr. Rev. George Munro ordained and inducted minister of Farr.]

28th November, 1754.—At Tongue. By an Act of

Synod the Presbytery is instructed to classify its parishes two and two to have the Lord's Supper administered each year in these two divisions each year, the one in June and the other in August. It was also provided that any hindering this arrangement should be reported to the Synod for prosecution.

It is reported to the Presbytery that the teacher at West Moin is dead.

24th March, 1756.—At Farr. A visitation of the church and manse of Farr to see their condition. There appeared Charles Gordon of Skelpick for the Earl of Sutherland, John MacKay, tacksman of Mudil as commissioner for the tutor of Farr and for the minor of Farr, wadsetter, and Aenas MacKay of Rinnevie, wadsetter; no representative from Strathy present.

[“ The Presbytery considering that the Synod (upon a representation of the many inconveniences attending the method of administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in this country by having that ordinance once a year only in one parish to which all the country convened) had appointed that ordinance to be given for the future in two parishes on the same day and that per vices and having interrogated the several brethren present thereanent—Mr. Ross answered that he would have it if he could ere the season was over. Mr. MacDonald answered that he could not have it for this year. And Mr. Munro having answered that he intended to have it some time before next Synod. The Presbytery delayed any further consideration of the Synod's appointment as above until Mr. MacKay returned from Edinburgh.”]

[*16th September, 1756.*—At Tongue. “ Mr. George Munro minister of Farr having represented to the Synod that he is resolved to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper this ensuing harvest in his parish and that the occasion was held at Durness last month. The Synod appoint Mr. John MacKay minister of

Eadrachillis to administer the sacrament along with Mr. Walter Ross and on the same day that it is administrat in the parish of Tongue this season; and for the ensuing year, 1757, and in all time coming. The Synod appoint that ordinance to be administrat in the parishes of Tongue and Eadrachillis in conjunction and on the same day and in the parishes of Durness and Farr in conjunction and on the same day. Intimating to that Presbytery that as the Synod are disposed in tenderness to them to overlook bygone neglect, they expect punctual obedience in time coming and are resolved to proceed to the censure of suspension against at any one or more of them who may incur it by their disobedience in time to come.”]

Mr. John Ross appointed itinerant preacher in the parish of Farr at £20 sterling a year.

Instead of late Donald MacKay (West Moin) his son John is appointed schoolmaster and catechist in parish of Durness.

30th July, 1759.—At Tongue. Mr. Munro, Farr, petitions for an assistant mentioning the name of Mr. John Ross, itinerant preacher in the parish. The Presbytery being “greatly affected by these things” mentioned in Mr. Munro’s petition grant its prayer.

[The same day “There was another petition presented by the elders of said parish in favour of George Gordon, a native thereof, who is an orphan and spent his small patrimony on his education which he is so far advanced as to be at College. The Presbytery are requested by the petitioners to support their application to the ensuing Synod.” The prayer of the petition is granted.]

26th September, 1759.—At Kirk of Tongue. Mr. John Ross ordained and admitted as itinerant minister of the parish of Farr.

15th April, 1762.—At Tongue. Rev. Walter Ross, demitted office as minister of Tongue in consequence

of failing health. Lord Reay sends a letter beseeching a speedy settlement as the church has been practically vacant for some time.

13th May, 1762.—At Tongue. A call to Tongue given to Rev. John MacKay, Eddrachillis. Mr. Daniel Forbes, writer in Ribigil, and Mr. Hugh MacKay, tacksman of Kirkibol appeared before the Presbytery to prosecute the call.

27th May, 1762.—At Tongue. Mr. John MacKay, Eddrachillis, inducted to Tongue.¹

7th July, 1763.—At Tongue. Mr. Alexander Falconer, formerly missionary at Fort Augustus, inducted minister of Eddrachillis and Mr. George Gordon licensed.

[At the meeting of Synod Mr. MacDonald “acquainted the Synod that he was resolved to administrate it [the Lord’s Supper] this year if his state of health became such as he could undergoe the fatigue necessary for him on such an occasion.” (Synod Register).]

1st November, 1764.—At Tongue. The Rev. John

¹ The following entry in the Rev. Murdo MacDonald’s MS. Diary throws some light on the difficulties experienced in getting a quorum of the Presbytery. Writing at Ribigil, in Tongue, on 15th May, 1762, he says: “On my arrival at Port Chamail (west side of Loch Eriboll), I found an express with a letter from Mr. George Munro, entreating me to come to Tongue, as our correspondent from the Presbytery of Dornoch, without whom there could not be a quorum, would come no further. In the letter there was, by order of the Grandees here, a boat to be sent for me next day, but finding myself greatly the worse of my walk to Port Chamail, I returned the express who was to be at Tongue in such time as might hinder the offered boat from setting out. In expectation whereof, I went next the day to Island Chorie, to which place notwithstanding all my precautions, the boat came at night with a feather bed and blankets for my accommodation at sea from Lady Rea, together with a second letter from the minister of Farr, earnestly pressing me to come over all impediments to the Presbytery’s seat, by the positive orders of said lady in absence of her lord. However surprising and disconcerting this new command was, finding the sea so very mild on the morning of Wednesday, I came off early and before 12 o’clock we arrived at Tongue.”—*Trans. Gaelic Soc. Inverness*, xi., 307, 8.

Thomson, lately schoolmaster at Golspie, ordained and inducted minister of Durness.

[10th April, 1766.—At Tongue. John Gordon came from parish of Farr as candidate for Society School there and was examined and sustained.]

On same day Mr. Munro reports that Mr. William MacKenzie, preacher of the gospel in the bounds of the Presbytery of Dingwall, has accepted the Mission of Farr commencing on April 1st and being in his way to the said parish appoint Mr. Munro to employ him as missionary and catechist.

27th October, 1766.—At Farr. This day it is represented to the Presbytery that the Commissioners of the Royal Bounty have appointed Mr. William MacKenzie to be employed as itinerant preacher and catechist in the parish of Farr and that he give a third part of his time to Strath-Halladale in parish of Reay. The salary to be £25.

[At the meeting of Synod held in 1767 when the question was put to all the ministers within the bounds of the Presbyteries included in the Synod if the sacrament of the Lord's Supper had been administered in their respective parishes "Mr. Falconer pled that he had not freedom to administrate that ordinance considering the offence taken against him by some of his parish. The Synod endeavoured to satisfy Mr. Falconer that this could be no reason for neglecting his duty." It would appear from a process brought against Mr. Falconer that the cause of offence was that his wife had to leave him. The family quarrel, however, was made up and the Synod did not press the Presbytery of Tongue to serve a libel on Mr. Falconer.]

[28th October, 1767.—At Tongue. Mr. William MacKenzie ordained. Same day Donald Munro appointed schoolmaster in Durness.]

4th April, 1769.—At Tongue. Mr. John MacKay, minister of Tongue, died 9th December, 1768.

7th December, 1769.—The Rev. William MacKenzie admitted minister of Tongue. A few were against him and protested.

2nd July, 1770.—At Tongue. Mr. Munro and Mr. Dingwall, itinerant preacher in Strathnaver, appointed to examine the Charity School at Langdale. The salary of the teacher was £7.

[At the Synod of 1772 when the usual question was put as to the administration of the Lord's Supper "the Presbytery of Tongue reported that it was administered in the parish of Far this season and that the scarcity of bread in that country prevented its being administered in the other parishes."]

[*30th October, 1772.*—Mr. James Dingwall ordained. John Gordon, Langdale, dismissed for neglect of duty.]

1st April, 1773.—At Tongue. Robert MacKay, tacksman, Clibrig, appeared in support of a petition relative to the Charity School at Langdale to have it transported to Achness and that Patrick Ross, private teacher Achness, be appointed teacher.

[*27th June, 1774.*—At Durness. John Mackay in Duartbeg is appointed to act as catechist in Eddrac-hillis.

Mr. John Gordon examined and found qualified to teach the Durness School.]

25th July, 1774.—At Tongue. William Calder appeared before the Presbytery as the teacher of the Society's newly erected school at Westmoin to receive his further instructions.

24th October, 1774.—At Tongue. On the following day Mr. William Gun licensed, *i.e.* 25 October.

[At the Synod of 1774 it is reported that Mr. Munro, Farr, is in such indisposition of body that he cannot administer the Lord's Supper "which the Synod are convinced of and therefore excuse him."]

2nd April, 1776.—At Tongue. "John Robertson from Abernethy Presbytery appointed by the S.P.C.K.

to the vacant school in the parish of Farr with £10 and an augmentation of 40/- on condition that the parish raises 40/- more." A new school is to be erected at Skerray and John Aiken appointed schoolmaster.

A FURTHER MEMORIAL ANENT THE
RENTS OF ZETLAND, THE PROPERTY
OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE EARL OF MORTON.

WITH NOTES BY R. STUART BRUCE.

THIS memorial, which is written by Mr. Thomas Gifford of Busta, probably in 1743, appears to be of sufficient general interest to warrant its inclusion in the pages of *Old-Lore Miscellany*. Mr. Gifford had evidently sent to the earl a previous note or memorial regarding the rents of Zetland, and, hoping that I might find a copy of the first memorial, I made diligent search for it, but so far without success. I therefore submit the "further memorial," hoping that some of the curious and intimate remarks of Mr. Gifford may throw some light on the manner in which rents were collected in 1743.

The remarks are very neatly written by Mr. Gifford himself, and extend to a little more than six quarto pages. They run as follows:—

The former memoriall I wrote upon this subject having been presented to the said noble earle, and after considering thereof his lordship was pleased to write me in the following manner;

"I received your letter with a Memoriall that was
"put in my hand by Mr. Da: Anderson, in the
"generall I am not averse to your proposall of feuing
"all my property lands in Zetland and as I have now
"an irredeemable right to that estate I'm willing to go

“to a greater lentgh [Mr. Gifford always spells
 “‘length’ in this manner] then you propose by grant-
 “ing new charters to the whole herritors in Zetland
 “comprehending not only the feus they hold befor but
 “such of the property lands as any of them inclines
 “to purchase & to restrict the feu duty to one half of
 “what is presently due and payable and convert the
 “same into money the purchasers paying me for such
 “demonution of duty at the rate the lands commonly
 “sell for in Zetland and at the usuall conversion but
 “still reserving to myself the property of all mines and
 “mineralls.”

If in this generall proposall made by the earle is
 mean'd the property lands only exclusive of the other
 rents paybll to his lo:sh: as our former feus bears and
 has been holden to bear, & that they have liberty to
 feu what part of these property lands they incline, then
 one half of them would never be feued but still remain
 property lands as they are at present, and can never be
 feued by any man but upon a verry great discompt of
 the rent now charged upon them, and therefor it will
 be verry inconvenient for the earle to feu any part of
 his property land in a parish unless the whole rents
 therein payable to his lo:sh: be feued, for whatever
 part thereof remains unfeued most turn to little or no
 accott and the earle will certainly find his accott in
 feuing his whole rents in each parish together for a
 yearlye payment of a certain feu duty payll to his
 lo:sh: without any discompt, trouble or charge altho
 these rents should be feued one fourth part below ye
 rentall charge, two thirds whereof never was made
 effectuall, nor indeed ever can be on the footing they
 stand att present; further, if by the rents now due and
 payable the earle means the whole rentall charge as
 contained in the rentall without any allowance for usuall
 retentions by lands &c., if by the usuall conversion ot
 butter and oyll into money is meant a rixdollar for the

lispond of butter and 12 shillings Scots for the can of oyll, and that full charge of the rents being restricted to one half thereof to be payed yearlie by the new charter to be granted and the other half of the rents diminished to be purchased by the feuer at the rate lands commonly sell for in Zetland: this were to purchase those rents at double their full value which no man in Zetland is either able or fool enough to do, and that such a purchase is impracticable will appear from those reasons, 1st. there is a great many paymts. in the rentall that never was in use of payment nor ever can be now which are called yearlie retentions which makes so much dimonution of the rents. 2do. There must be yearlie a great many ley lands which pay no rent and is a verry considerable dimintn. of the rents yearlie. 3to. The greatest part of these rents being paybll. in butter and oyll which for 30 years past has never yeilded 2 shillings the lispond butter & sixpence [the] can oyll at any market, all charges cleared and reckoning one year with another during that time, so that purchasing that at four shilling and tenpence which one most sell at 2 shillings and sixpence will soon make a poor purchaser. 4to. the small triffling payment wherein the rents are made such as in a parish that pays not to the value of £500 Scots a year yet is payed in by no less then 200 people in butter oyll & money which must create a great deal of trouble in collecting these rents, and many of the poor people must faill in the payment, and in the last place the great inconveniency attending of property lands is that they happen to be cast in verry small parcells and then lying so dispersed and discontinuous from one anoyr. that it is utterly imposible to get them improven to any purpose so that with the utmost care one half of the rent can be made out of thm. yearlie and are often set for less then half the rent when laboured and great part of them are ley or unimproven, now these reasons being considered as reall matter of

fact there can be no difficulty in seeing the absolute necessity of granting a verry considerable diminution of the rents to the feuers or purchasers thereof other ways such feu or purchase is utterly impracticable and if such diminution of these rents allowed by the earle at granting of new charters to the herritors of Zetland shall be found not to exceed the constant anuall discompt or defficiency upon these rents for fourty years back but that there is by the new charters either payd in to his lo:sh: or secured by an anuall feu duty a certain sum equivoilent to if not exceeding the usuall yearlie clear payment of these rents in any of the said years back when best improven and the feu duty by the new charter a certain annual paymt. without any charge or discompt thereupon in all time coming to be punctually paid by the respective feuers at the terms and places stipolate in the said charters and thereby all ground of dispute betwixt the earle and the herritors of Zetland about the payment of these rents will be for ever removed.

But I'm afraid there will be found verry few if any of the herritors of Zetland that are capable to purchase the dimunition of the rents proposed by the earle allowing the same to be brought so low as reasonable can be expected they not being able to raise the money, and therefor such of them as I have had opportunity to converse upon that subject seem not much inclined to take new charters but rather to hang on with their old ones as long as they can, unles they could have better conditions in the new; neither have they that knowledge or experience in that affair they judge sufficient to direct them in making a right transaction with the earle thereanent, some of them being of one [mind] some of anothr. so that it is imposible to bring them all unto a joint unanimous agreement thereanent but chuse rather to stand undetermined in that matter untill some of the greatest experience amongst them shall once

begin with taking a new charter from the earle and that would serve as a rule to the rest of them and then I doubt not but the whole rents might be verry soon feued out to the earle's satisfaction. And for facilitating such happy and verry much to be wishd aggrement betwixt the said noble earle and the herritors of Zetland and as I begun the proposall of accomodation betwixt them so I am most willing and desirous to contribute my utmost endeavours to bring the same to such a conclusion as may be most for the earle's intrst and peace and quiet of the herritors in Zetland and for that end I am willing to go the utmost lentgh nay even further then the subject can bear to agree to the earle[s] proposalls chusing rather to be a looser thereby then that such a happy setlement should not be brought about, and therefor I shall be satisfyid to take a herritable charter from the earle upon his lo:shs: whole rents in the parishes of Delting and Northmaven together with some litle lands I formerlie held in feu in the next adjacent parishes conform to an exact rentall of them taken from a particular rentall of the whole lands, becoming bound by that charter to pay yearlie in name of feu duty the sum of 50 pounds sterling at the terms and places stipolated in the said charter and also to pay for the dimunition of the rents the sum of five hundred pounds said money at three terms (viz.) the first term at Whitsunday emmediately after granting the foresaid charter & the 2d term of payment at Whitsunday in the following year and the last term payment at Whitsunday thereafter with intrest after the first term of payment and thus in sincerity I pay mor then the full value of those rents and mor then the best land in Zetland ever sell for, and that one [on] account of the unavoidable dimunition and discompt upon them, particularly above mentioned, and severall small diffiencys there upon which I shall not particularise, and in case the earle is not

pleased to go unto this proposall, I am as well satisfied to take a feu charter on all the foresaid rents for the yearlie payment of one hundred pounds sterling in name of feu duty at the usuall terms of payment and in full of all other charges and payment thereupon. It will no doubt be noticed that the yearlie rent of the above mentioned lands amounts conform to the rentall to the sum of one hundred and six pound. Now as to that six pound over and the diminition on the high prices of the butter and oill both which will not make up yearlie one half of the discompt and loss upon those rents yearlie, through the certain and inevitable deductions thereupon, particularly above mentioned, and if the earle is pleased to go into either of those proposalls and expect the small jurisdiction of baillerie will be anexed to the charter, without which these rents cant be raised, and having thus set this affair in the clearest light I can and by the above proposalls raised the value of those rents as high if not higher than any heritor in Zetland is able to bid for them so as the earle not being satisfied with any of those proposalls his lo:sh: might be no further troubled about them, and the heritors must even hang on by the holding they have and the former use of payment as long as they can and in all events I shall have the satisfaction in having by these memorialls signified my inclination and endeavour to promot the said noble earle his intrest in Zetland and for cultivatting such a good understanding betwixt his lo:sh: and the heritors there as may justly intitle them to the honour of his valuable friendship and protection which is the principall design intended hereby and the hearty wish of [Thomas Gifford].

The memorial is backed thus: "A cobby of this sent to Mr. Da. Anderson, 6th Febry, 1744." This Mr. David Anderson appears to have been the founder of the well-known firm of Messrs. J. & F. Anderson, W.S., Edinburgh.

ORKNEY AND SHETLAND FOLK,
872—1350.

BY A. W. JOHNSTON.

III.

(Concluded from p. 143, *ante.*.)

Sveinn brjóstreip, *circa* 1136, had a kinsman Jón, of whose family nothing more is known. He was a hirðmaðr of earl Páll, by whom he was well esteemed, *metinn vel af honum*. He spent the summer in víking and the winter with the earl. He was a *mikill* man and *sterkr*, strong, *svartr*, of dark complexion, and rather evil-looking, *úhamingju-samligr*, he was a great wizard, *forn mjök*, and had always sat out at night (as a wizard), *úti setið* (in order to raise *troll*, ghosts), which, in accordance with Old Gulathinglaw, was *úbótaverk*, an unfinable crime punished by outlawry. He was one of the earl's forecastle men, *stafnbúi*, and was the foremost of all the earl's men in battle, and fought bravely, *barðist all-hraustliga*. Sveinn preferred "sitting out" to attending midnight mass on Yule. The bishop hailed his slaughter as a cleansing of the land of miscreants, *land-hreinsan*. It was the opinion of Ragna of Rinansey, that the earl had little scathe in Sveinn, even though he were a great warrior or bravo, *garpr mikill*, and that the earl had suffered much unpopularity, *úvinsældir miklar*, through him.

There can be little doubt as to the race of the swarthy wizard Sveinn, notwithstanding his Norse name. With him compare the Icelandic-named Gaelic witch, Þórgunna, in *Eyrbyggja Saga*.

Hávarðr Gunnason, *circa* 1090, was a *gœðingr*, who married Bergljót, daughter of Ragnhildr, daughter of earl Páll. Their children were Magnús, Hákon kló, Dufnjáll (Gael., *Domhnall*, Donald) and Þorsteinn. Hávarðr was on board earl Hákon's ship, on the way

to the last meeting with earl St. Magnús; and when he was informed that Magnús was to be killed, he jumped overboard and swam to a desert isle, rather than be party to the martyrdom.

Dufnjáll Hávarðsson and one Ríkarðr (Richard), were worst in their counsel against Sveinn, when he was in trouble with the earl about Murgað's goings on. His brother, Hákon kló, married the illegitimate daughter of Sigurðr slembidjákn, by a daughter of one of Moddan's carlines. The names Gunni and Dufnjáll appear to point to the Caithness origin of this family, as well as does the Caithness marriage of Hákon kló.

Þorljótr í Rekavík, 1116-26, married Steinvör digra, (the stout), daughter of Frakök Moddansdóttir and Ljótr níðingr (the dastard), in Suðrland. Their son was Ölvir rósta (the unruly); a great and powerful man, *manna mestr ok ramr at afli*, turbulent, *upþivöðslumaðr mikill*, and a great manslayer, *vígamaðr mikill*. He, at the instigation of his grandmother, Frakök, burnt Ólafr, Svein's father, in his house. Their other children were Magnús, Ormr, Moddan (Gaelic), Eindriði, and a daughter, Auðhildir. The whole of this nest left Orkney with Frakök, in her repatriation, under whose evil influence they were reared.

Notices of Shetland, in the Saga, are to all intents and purposes nil. We find among the Shetlanders who were taken to be healed at St. Magnús' shrine two bæendr, viz., Þorbjörn, son of Gyrð (O.E. Gurth), and Sigurðr Tandarson, who abode in Dalr, in north Shetland, and who was *djöful-óðr* or *ærr*, possessed or mad. Tandr, or Taðkr, is E.Ir. *Tadg*, and the Shetland Tandarson = Gaelic *M'Caog*, Ir., *Mac Taidhg*, Mac-Caig, son of Teague.

The Irish Gaels, who settled in Iceland in the ninth century, proved to be desirable and enterprising colonists, the admixture of whose blood helped to form the Icelandic genius in saga and song. They readily

adopted Icelandic patronymics and names, and gave up their Christianity for the Norse religion. Their presence is commemorated there to this day in Irish place-names and in the continued use of Irish person-names.

The Scottish Gaels who settled in Orkney were, in accordance with the Saga, in some cases undesirable adventurers, of evil reputation, loose habits, glib, mischief-makers, oath-breakers, witches and wizards. They do not appear to have endowed their offspring with traits other than their own, combined with a personal appearance which is usually described as unattractive.

Gaelic names of residents in Orkney first make their appearance in the late eleventh century in the family of Hávarðr Gunnason, who was probably a Caithness Gael.

The differentiation between the Norwegians and the mixed Gaelic-Norse race in Orkney, is unmistakably brought into prominence in the middle of the twelfth century, when the Norwegian contingent of the famous crusade, which wintered in Orkney, got on so ill with the islanders that it resulted in murder and bloodshed about love and mercantile affairs.

The earls who were of Gaelic descent in the female line, while exhibiting Gaelic features, were also good rulers and great warriors, whose exploits provided good copy for the *Orkneyinga-Saga*, which was probably written down by Icelanders. The Gaelic admixture of blood in Orkney does not appear to have produced any literary or poetic talent such as it did in Iceland.

As mentioned in a previous paper,¹ the *Orkneyinga saga* consists of only two complete sagas, viz. (1) *Jarlasögur*, earls' sagas, the history of earl Þorfinnr hinn ríki and his joint earls—his brothers, and his nephew, Rögnvaldr Brúsason, 1014-1064, and (2) *Rögnvalds saga hins helga*, the story of earl St. Rögnvaldr, 1136-1158, brought down to the death of Sveinn Ásleifarson, 1171. The first of these sagas is prefaced with a sum-

¹ *Saga-Book*, 1914.

mary of the sagas of the preceding earls, 872-1014, of which none have been preserved, while the second is prefaced with a summary of the sagas of the earls, 1064-1136, the period between the first and the second sagas, of which we have preserved St. Magnús' saga, 1108-1116. The saga of earl Haraldr Maddaðarson, 1139-1206, is partly preserved in the second saga, and in *Flateyjarbók*.

As regards Orkney poets, earl Torf-Einarr, the skáld, was a Norwegian by birth and family, with a thrall mother, probably Finnish, from which admixture of Norse and dark races he probably derived his ugly appearance and poetic genius.

Earl St. Rögnvaldr, the skáld, was also a Norwegian by birth, and the son of a Norwegian father, while his mother was an Orkney woman of Gaelic extraction. Bishop Biarni, the skáld, was the only Orkney born poet, but his father was also a Norwegian, and his mother an Orkney woman of Gaelic extraction. It is just possible that these two last-named skálds derived their poetic inspiration from just the right dash of Gaelic descent.

All the other poets, whose compositions are recorded in the saga, were Icelanders: Arnórr Jarlaskáld, Hallr, etc. It goes without saying that Orcadians and Shetlanders must have been, like their fellow Norsemen of the period, improvisers, whose verses, although referred to, have not been preserved.

There were only two Orkney saints, viz., earls Magnús and Rögnvaldr, the one was martyred and the other assassinated, and both of them had very little Gaelic blood.

It is a question whether Orkney and Shetland, with their Christian Picts and heathen Norse, in the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries, were the birth-place of some of the Edda lays; and whether any of these lays were current there, as oral tradition, and taken down

in writing in the twelfth century by earl St. Rögnvaldr and his Icelandic skálds. The solitary preservation and use of many Edda poetic words in Shetland is significant. The first notices we have of writing in the saga are in 1116, when Kali Kolsson, afterwards (1136), earl Rögnvaldr Kali, in a verse, numbered among his accomplishments, *bók*, reading and writing, in 1136, when Rodbart compiled the Latin saga of St. Magnús, and, in 1152, when earl Erlendr produced king Eystein's *bréf*, letter, at the þing in Kirkjuvágr.

With regard to person-names, it will have been noted that the Norse earls in the male line, although half Gaels, always gave their children Norse names, while the Gaelic earls, who were only of slight Norse descent, gave their children Norse, English and Gaelic names. So that the *gœðingar* and other leading families of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, who also gave their children Norse, English and Gaelic names, were therefore probably, like the Gaelic earls, also of Gaelic descent in the male line. This is also in accordance with the known practice of other Gaelic settlers in Iceland, etc.

The non-Norse characteristics of persons of Gaelic descent are most pronounced—black hair, swarthy complexion, quarrelsome, given to witchcraft, pawky and glib, oath-breakers, etc., which perhaps point to the Iberian element rather than to the true Gael; and that in comparison with the Norse—fair-haired, accomplished and well-bred, generous, makers of hard bargains, which they, however, kept, true to their word, etc.

It must be remembered that these comparative characteristics are the observations of the Norsemen themselves, who wrote the saga, probably Icelanders, and therefore, presumably, exaggerated in their own favour. They are valuable, however, in placing beyond doubt the large strain of non-Norse people who lived in Orkney.

It has been shown that the Gaelic earls, 1139-1350, adopted Norse patronymics, and that all persons in Orkney and Shetland before 1350 used Norse patronymics, including the numerous Gaelic families, which must have settled in the islands. There was no other alternative, just as it was, conversely, the case in the Hebrides, where the Gaels predominated, and where their language prevailed, and was adopted by the Norsemen. Here the Norse *Goðormsson* became Gaelic *M'Codrum*, *Þorketilsson* : *M'Corcodail*, *Ivarsson* : *M'Iamhair*, etc., etc. Compare also the case in Ireland.

Gaelic names in Orkney and Shetland in their Norse form have already been dealt with.

The blending of Norse and Gael in the Hebrides does not appear to have been more successful than in Orkney, since we find, in 1139, that earl Rögnvaldr said that most *Suðreyingar* were untrue, and even Sveinn Ásleifarson put little faith in them.

The use of Norse names and patronymics by the leading Gaels in Caithness, who are alone mentioned in the Saga, is accounted for by the fashion set by their Norse earls, as well as through the influence of Norse marriages. While the leading people must have been bilingual, speaking Norse (the court language), and Gaelic, the *almúgi*, or common people, appear to have maintained their native Gaelic. This is indicated in two striking instances in the Saga. In 1158, earls Haraldr and Rögnvaldr went from Þórs-á up Þórs-dalr and took *gisting*, night quarters, at some *erg*, which "we call *setr*." The local Gaelic name of such a shieling was *àiridh*, E. Ir. *airge*, *áirge*. In 1152, earl Haraldr, who was living at Víkr, dispersed his men *á veizlur*, i.e., quartered them on various houses, in accordance with the obligations of the householders, during *Páskar*, Easter; then the *Katnesingar* said that the earl was on *kunn-mið*. Vigfússon suggested that

this word was some corrupt form of a local name; Dasent translated it "visitations," and Goudie "guest-quarters," which is correct, as *kunn-mið* must be Gaelic, *comaidh*, a messing, eating together, E. Ir. *commaid*; cf. Gaelic *coinne*, *coinneamh*, a supper, a party, to which everyone brings his own provisions, E. Ir. *coindem*, *cionmed*, quartering, coigny, conveth. In both these cases the E. Ir. spelling comes nearer to the Norse than the Scottish Gaelic does, and corresponds to the Scottish Gaelic of the twelfth century.

The fact that the earl had the right to quarter his men in Orkney and Shetland, is preserved in the tax, *wattle* < *veizla*, which was paid in lieu of actual entertainment. This tax continues to be paid to this day.

"The Inhabitants of Orkney and Shetland after 1350," will be the subject of a future paper; meanwhile it may be emphasised that the Gaelic earls of Orkney failed in the male line before the Scots began to assume permanent surnames. The Gaelic earls were succeeded, in the female line, by the Lowland-Norman family of St. Clair, bearing a hereditary surname, about the time of whose arrival began the Lowland-Scottish settlement of Orkney, to the influence of which must be attributed the assumption of the Lowland Scottish language and the adoption of place-surnames, and not fixed patronymics, in Orkney, by the Norse-Gaelic inhabitants. Shetland, being far removed from the seat of government and fashion, continued the use of patronymics until the nineteenth century, when they became fixed.

The great number of persons in Orkney and Shetland bearing the names of Tulloch and Sinclair appears to indicate that the ancestors of some of them may have been tenants of the bishopric and earldom who, in accordance with Gaelic custom, assumed the names of their lords of that ilk. The Tulloch bishops ruled, 1418-1477, and the Sinclair earls and lessees, 1379-1542, the period during which patronymics were giving place

to hereditary surnames in Orkney. Tulloch and Sinclair may also have been Christian names which became stereotyped as patronymics and the "son" termination afterwards dropped, as in the case of Omondson, > Omond.

Shetlanders pride themselves in their geographic detachment from Orkney with its Scottish people and customs, and claim to be regarded as purer Norsemen as compared with the Scots of Orkney. Perhaps it is owing to this qualified humdrum purity that the Shetlanders did not achieve any deeds of sufficient interest to be recorded in the Saga. However, from an anthropological point of view, the Pictish and small dark strain is as much in evidence in Shetland as in Orkney, and perhaps more so.

In the twelfth century even an ordinary Shetland *bóndi*, farmer, had his thrall, and *manfrelsi*, giving a thrall his freedom, is mentioned as an ordinary transaction. The thrall element must therefore have formed a large proportion of the population, and intermarriage must have taken place between the Norse and the thralls. We find the earls had children by thralls, and intermarriage between the *bœndr* and thralls, especially the freed thralls, must also have taken place.

Persons of mixed racial descent are usually very loud in an exaggerated appreciation of the heroic line of their ancestry, especially when it is on the distaff side, usually coupled with an inverse depreciation of the other ascent which is represented by an inappropriate and inconvenient surname.

There would be no necessity for a genuine Norse islander to crow himself hoarse on his native rock; and, to do so, would indicate that there were grave doubts as to the purity of his strain.

Hitherto the Norse traditions of Orkney and Shetland have been solely espoused by outlanders and by natives bearing surnames which leave no doubt as to their foreign origin.

The most voluminous history of Shetland was written by an English tourist, Dr. Hibbert, afterwards Dr. Hibbert Ware. But then, the English are noted for their greater interest in the history and antiquities of countries other than their own, which may be accounted for by the exceptional variety of races which they represent.

But after all the land makes the man. If it had not been for these northern islands there would have been no *Orkneyinga Saga* with its verses and narratives of stirring events.

Dr. John Rae, first honorary president of this Society, was a Scottish Gael born in Orkney (where his father had settled), an Orkneyman of Orkneymen; and to his youthful training, experience in boating, and his environment in these islands, he attributed his success in Arctic exploration.

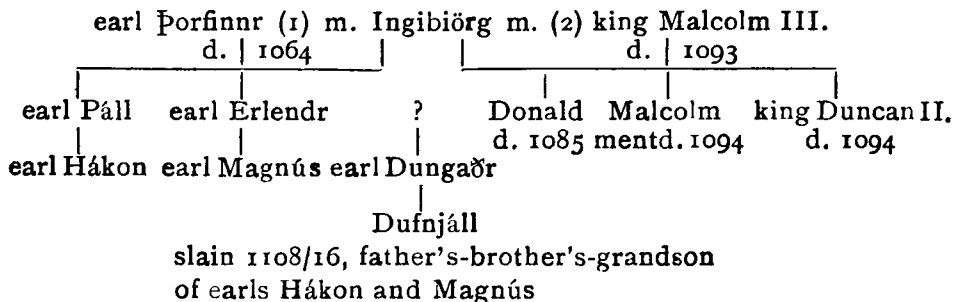
And, moreover, it is well known that Orkney and Shetland supply the British Navy and mercantile marine with a deal more than their due share of personnel, and have given the British colonies a good supply of useful pioneers and settlers.

APPENDIX.

Thralls in Orkney. In *Landnámabók* it is stated that [besides the Scot earl Melbrigða tónn] Sigurðr hinn ríki, the first Norse earl of Orkney, slew [circa 872-4] the Scot earl Meldun [Gaelic, *Maelduine*] and took his wife Myrgiol [Muir-gheal] daughter of Gliomal [Gleomael], king of the Irish, and their son Erpr [Welsh *Yrþ*] Meldunsson as booty and made slaves of them—tók þau at herfange, ok þiáðe. Myrgiol was bondmaid, *ambátt*, to the earl's wife, *jarls kona*, or queen, *dróttning*, and served her faithfully, and was learned in witchcraft, *margkunnig*. Queen Auðr bought Myrgiol at a high price [from whom?] and took her and her son Erpr to Iceland, where Erpr received his freedom and land and was ancestor of the Erpingar.

It should have been stated (p. 137, *ante*) that Dufnjál's grandfather must have been either an illegitimate son of earl Þorfinnr hinn ríki or otherwise a son of his widow, Ingibiörg, by her second husband king Malcolm III. of Scotland, whose sons were king Duncan II., Donald and Malcolm. Nothing definite is known about the two latter, who were

half-brothers of earls Páll and Erlendr, and earl Dungaðr (Duncan), Dufnjál's father, may have been a son of one of them.



NEWS NOTES.

John O' Groat Journal. The third and concluding article on 'the Great Border dog hunt' is given July 31st.

Northern Chronicle. The Frasers of Belladrum, August 5th, with documents dealing with the lands of Wester Muily, Muilzes in Glenstrafarar, Easter Downy, Little Culmullin, Aird, Beaufort, Mid Mayne, Wester Eskadale, Leamghorrie, etc. An account of the Battle of Harlaw, 1411, is given July 29th.

Shetland News. 'Mansie's Röd' (continued).

Shetland Times. (See Notes, *ante*).

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Abbreviations: O, Orkney; S, Shetland; C, Caithness; Sd, Sutherland.

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ERRATA.

- p. 19, l. 4 up, read *kuff* > *kwiff*. There seems to be little doubt that
whilly is from Gaelic *culaidh* (see Vol. VI., 191), as Jacobsen shows
 that *kuff* > *kwiff* > *hwiff*, hence *culaidh* > *kwilli* > *hwilli*.
 p. 40, l. 4 up, for *John Munro*, read *Hugh Munro*.
 p. 44, l. 5, "James" deleted in minute and "John" written on margin.
 p. 48, l. 5 up, read *Skerries*.
 p. 87, l. 16, read *strá-dauða*.
 p. 95, l. 9, read *skríða á skidum*.
 p. 109, l. 16, insert semicolon between "influence" and "they." *Their*
influence, i.e., the Presbytery's influence.
 p. 169, l. 15, for *father*, read *factor*.
 p. 188, line 5 up, for *Vikr*, read *Vik*.
 p. 192, for corrected genealogy of Dufnjáll see VIII., 17.
 Orkney and Shetland Folk : the chronology has been amended in the Index.