

took down Hrafnkell and his men, and set them down in a field; and then blood had already filled their eyes. Then said Thorgeirr to Sámur that he should now deal with Hrafnkell as he liked, "for meseems it is now a matter of small difficulty to deal with him." Then answered Sámur: "Two choices are set before thee, Hrafnkell; one to be taken outside the stead, together with those of thy men that I choose, and to be slaughtered; but whereas thou hast a great number of useless mouths to provide for, I will allow thee to look thereto. So the second choice is, if thou wilt have thy life, that thou betake thyself from Aðalból with all thy folk and with so much money only as I share to thee, which shall be mighty little; but I shall settle on thy property and have the rule of all thy men; and to neither shalt thou ever raise a claim, nor thy heirs, nor shalt thou ever live nearer this place than somewhere to the east of Fljótsdalshérað; and this thou mayest handsel me if thou art ready to accept it." Hrafnkell answered: "Many a man would think a swift death better than such hard dealings, but, belike, I shall fare after the manner of many, 'that life be chosen while choice there is;' which I do, mostly because of my sons, for theirs will be a scanty prospect if I die from them." Then Hrafnkell was let loose and he handselled self-doom unto Sámur. Sámur allowed Hrafnkell so much of the wealth as he chose, which was a slight portion indeed. His spear Hrafnkell retained, but no weapon besides; and this very day he betook himself from Aðalból together with all his folk. Then said Thorkell to Sámur: "I wonder at thy doing this, for no man will regret more than thyself having given Hrafnkell his life." Sámur said that could not be helped now. Hrafnkell brought his household east over Fljótsdalshérað and right across Fljótsdalr unto the eastern side of Lagarfljót. At the bottom of that water stood a small stead, which was called Lokhylla. This land Hrafnkell bought on credit, for his means went no further than to cover the cost of household implements. People had much talk about this, how Hrafnkell's masterfulness had suddenly come down to nought; and many a man now recalls the ancient saw: "Short is the age of overboldness." This was a good woodland and large in extent, but the house was a poor one, and therefore he bought the land at a low price. But Hrafnkell spared no cost; he felled the wood, which was large, and raised there a lofty abode, which since has been called Hrafnkelsstaðir, and has always been accounted of as a good stead. During the first seasons Hrafnkell lived there in battle with hard distress. He had much ado in storing his home with fish. He went much about common labour while the stead was being built. The first half-year he embarked on the winter with one calf and one kid. But it turned well out for him, so that nearly everything lived in the way of live stock, which was added to it; and it might be said that nearly every creature was with two heads. That same summer there happened to be a large catch in Lagarfljót, which brought the householders of the country-side many a comfort, and this held on well every summer. Sámur set up his house at Aðalból after Hrafnkell, and set