

youth answered : " I wish thou wouldst ride away west to the dale, where thou shalt be in safety ; but I know so much of Hrafnkell's temper, that he will do nothing to us, if he should miss thee ; for, if thou alone be safe, then all things are well seen to ; then there 'be no bear to tug along,' and that is well, whatsoever may become of us." Eyvindr said he felt no desire to ride so hurriedly away, "for I know not who the men may be, and many a man would find a matter good to laugh at if I should run away before it came to any trial at all." Now they rode west over the lava, when they came upon another mire called Oxemire, a grassy spot, with bogs which are all but impassable. Hence old Hallfreðr struck the higher tracks, though they were longer. Now Eyvindr rode westward into the bog-land, where the horses came by, plentifully weltering in the mire ; and they were much delayed because thereof. The others, riding loose, quickly covered the ground, and Hrafnkell and his men rode their way towards the bog-land. And just as Eyvindr had got over the bogs, he saw that there was come Hrafnkell and both his sons. Now Eyvindr's men bade him ride away, now all trammels are past, " And thou wilt have time to reach Aðalból while the bog-land lies between thee and Hrafnkell." Eyvindr answered : " I mean not to fly away from any man to whom I never did any harm." So now they rode upon the neck of the land where some small hills rise above the ground. On this neck, spurring off from the mountain, there was a certain hummock and a windswept place surrounded by high banks. Up to this spot Eyvindr rode, and got there off his horse and waited for them. Then Eyvindr said : " Now we shall soon know their errand." After this they betook themselves up on to the hummock, where they broke up some stones. Now Hrafnkell turned off the road, making for the hummock. Without accosting Eyvindr with a word, he set on them forthwith. Eyvindr defended himself well and manfully ; but his attendant, not deeming himself the stoutest of men for fighting, took his horse and rode west over the neck to Aðalból, and told Sámr what was going on. Sámr bestirred himself quickly, gathering men together, so that there was twenty of them in a band, and right well-armed following he had. Now Sámr rode eastward unto the heath, and to the spot where the fight had stood, and saw how matters had come about between them, and how Hrafnkell rode eastward again from his work ; Eyvindr lying there fallen, and all his men. The first thing Sámr did, was to try if there still lingered life in the body of his brother, and carefully he was searched ; but they had all lost their lives, five of them together. Of Hrafnkell's men, twelve had fallen, but six had been able to ride away. Now Sámr made a short stay here, and rode, together with his men, in pursuit of Hrafnkell, who rode away as fast as they could on their weary horses. Then said Sámr : " We shall be able to overtake them, they having their horses jaded, ours being all fresh ; yet it will be a hard thing to reach them, though, probably, if they cross the heath before, it will be at a close shave." At this time Hrafnkell had passed Oxemire again to the eastward.