

THE STORY OF HRAFNKELL, FREY'S PRIEST.

It was in the days of King Harold Fairhair that a man brought his ship to Iceland into Breiðdal, his name being Hallfreðr. Breiðdal is a countryside down below that of Fljótsdalr. On board his ship was his wife and son, who was hight Hrafnkell, who was then fifteen winters old, a hopeful man and a goodly. Hallfreðr set up household. In the course of the winter there died a servant-maid of foreign kin, whose name was Arnthráðr; hence the name of the place Arnthráðr-staðir. In the spring Hallfreðr moved his house northward over the heath, and set up a home at a place called Geitdalr. One night he dreamt that there came a man to him, and said: "There liest thou, Hallfreðr, and rather unwarily; flit thy house away west across the Lagarfljót, for there all thy good luck awaits thee." Thereupon he awoke and flitted his belongings down valley across Rangá, into the Tongue, to a spot, which has since been called Hallfreðar-staðir, and there he dwelt into a good old age. In breaking up from Geitdalr he had left a goat and a buck behind, and the same day that Hallfreðr left, an earthslip struck the house, and there these two creatures were lost. Hence the name Geitdalr, which this place has borne ever since.

Hrafnkell made it his wont to ride upon the heaths in the summer-seasons. At this time Jökuldalr was all settled as high as the bridge. Once Hrafnkell rode up along Fljótsdalahérað and saw that a certain void valley stretched up beyond Jökuldalr, which seemed to him to be a better settlement than other valleys which he had seen already. And when he came home, he asked his father to share him out his part in the property, saying, that he was minded to set up house in the valley. This his father granted him, and in the valley he had found, he made an abode for himself, which he called Aðalból. Hrafnkell got him for wife Oddbjörg, daughter of Skjaldúlfr, from Laxárdalr, with whom he begat two sons, the older hight Thórir, the younger Ásbjörn. But when Hrafnkell had hallowed for himself the land of Aðalból, he held a great sacrificial feast, and a great temple, too, he reared up there. Hrafnkell loved no other god before Frey, and to him he made offerings of all the best things he had, going half-shares. Hrafnkell settled the whole of the valley, bestowing lands on other people, on condition of being their chief; and thus he assumed priesthood over them. From this it came