

was exposed for sale with eleven other women at a market in Norway. The slave-dealer, a man known as Gilli (Ir. Giolla) "the Russian" was in all probability a Scandinavian merchant from Ireland who had carried on trade with Russia. The extent of the slave traffic is further illustrated in *Kristni Saga* (ch. 3) where mention is made of "a fair Irish maid" whom Thangbrandr the priest bought; "and when he came home with her a certain man whom the emperor Otto the Young had put as steward there, wished to take her from him," but Thangbrandr would not let her go!¹ On the other hand, the Irish frequently descended on the Viking strongholds in Ireland and carried off the Norse women and children, "the soft, youthful, bright, matchless girls; blooming, silk-clad young women, and active, large well-formed boys."² Therefore it is not unlikely that the "slaves ignorant of Gaelic" who are stated to have been given as tribute to the Irish kings in the ninth and tenth centuries³ were really Scandinavian prisoners of war.

An interesting passage in the *Book of Ely* gives an idea of the activity of the Irish merchants at this period: "Certain merchants from Ireland, with merchandise of different kinds and some coarse woollen blankets, arrived at the little town called Grantebrycge (Cambridge) and exposed their wares there."⁴ It is not surprising then that the wealth of Ireland increased rapidly, so much so that Brian Borumha, realising that this was largely due to Viking enterprise, allowed the invaders to remain in their forts on the coast "for the purpose of attracting commerce from

¹ *Kristni Saga*, ch. 3.

² *War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, p. 79.

³ *The Book of Rights* (Leabhar na gCeart), pp. 87, 181. Ed. J. O'Donovan.

⁴ *Liber Eliensis*, (ed. Gale) I., ch. XLII.