

CHAPTER VI.

LINGUISTIC INFLUENCES.

(a) Loan-words from Old Norse in Irish.

THE large number of loan-words from Old Norse which occur in Old and Middle Irish indicate clearly the extent and character of Scandinavian influence in Ireland. They are therefore interesting from an historical point of view, for they confirm, and sometimes supplement, the evidence of Irish and Icelandic sources, that the relations existing between the two peoples were largely of a friendly character.

As the subject has already been fully dealt with by Celtic scholars,¹ only the more important loan words are given here :—

I. DRESS² AND ARMOUR.

O.Ir. *at-cluic*, also *clocc-att* 'a helmet.' *att* = O.N. *hatt*, 'a hat,' while *cluic* = M. Ir. *clocenn*, 'a head'

M. Ir. *allsmann*; O.N. *halsmen*, 'a necklace.'

M. Ir. *boga*; O.N. *bogi*, 'a bow.'

M. Ir. *bossan*; O.N. *þúss*, 'a small bag or purse hanging from the belt.'

M. Ir. *cnapp*; O.N. *knapp*, 'a button.'

¹ Cf. the list of authorities referred to *ante*, pp. 38, 39.

² The Norsemen sometimes adopted Irish fashions in their dress. The great Viking Magnus, who was killed in Ireland in A.D. 1103, was usually called "barelegs" (O.N. *berfaettr*) because he always wore the Irish kilts; and his son, Harold Gilli, who could speak Irish better than Norse, "much wore the Irish raiment, being short-clad and light-clad." It was probably from his Irish *cúaran*, or shoes of skin that Olaf Silfricsson, the famous King of Dublin received his nickname.