

place they built a temple and offered up sacrifices.¹ We hear, too, of Orlygr the Old, who had been fostered by Bishop Patrick in the Hebrides. When he was setting out for Iceland the Bishop gave him "wood for building a church, a plenary, an iron penny and some consecrated earth to be put under the corner pillars," and asked him to dedicate the church to St. Columba. On the voyage a great storm arose. Orlygr prayed to St. Patrick that he might reach Iceland in safety, promising, as a thanksgiving, to call the place in which he should land by the saint's name.² Mention is also made of several other Christians from the British Isles: Jörundr, Helgi Bjóla;³ Thorkell—son of Svarkell from Caithness—"who prayed before the cross, ever good to old men, ever good to young men;"⁴ Ásólf,⁵ Ketill—grandson of Ketill Flatnose—who was surnamed *hinn fjfski* ('the foolish') because he adhered to Christianity.⁶ A long time after (c. A.D. 997) Thangbrandr the Priest found descendants of Ketill's in Iceland, "all of whom had been Christians from father to son."⁷ Considering the missionary ardour of the Irish at this period it is curious that no priests accompanied these early settlers to Iceland. This may have been due to scepticism as to the sincerity of these converts; such, at least, is the impression received from the Irish annals and chronicles, in which the Norsemen are almost invariably referred to as 'heathens' and 'pagans.' The result was that the influence of Christianity declined in Iceland; "some of those who came from west-the-sea remained Christians until the day of

¹ *Landnámabók*, II., ch. 16.

² *Landnámabók*, I., ch. 12.

³ *Ib.*, V., ch. 15.

⁴ *Ib.*, I., ch. 13.

⁵ *Ib.*, I., ch. 15.

⁶ *Ib.*, IV., ch. 11.

⁷ *Njáls Saga*, ch. 101.