

**ISLANDICA; AN ANNUAL
RELATING TO ICELAND AND THE
FISKE ICELANDIC COLLECTION IN
CORNELL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY,
VOL. XII: MODERN ICELANDIC**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649339822

Islandica; An annual relating to iceland and the fiske icelandic collection in cornell university library, Vol. XII: modern icelandic by Halldór Hermannsson

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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HALLDÓR HERMANNSSON

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EXTRACTS FROM THE WILL OF THE LATE
WILLARD FISKE

—"I give and bequeath to the Cornell University at Ithaca, New York, all my books relating to Iceland and the old Scandinavian literature and history. . . ."

—"I give and bequeath to the said Cornell University . . . the sum of Five Thousand (5000) Dollars, to have and to hold for ever, in trust, nevertheless, to receive the income thereof, and to use and expend the said income for the purposes of the publication of an annual volume relating to Iceland and the said Icelandic Collection in the library of the said University."

In pursuance of these provisions the following volumes have been issued:

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| ISLANDICA | I. | Bibliography of the Icelandic Sagas, by Halldór Hermannsson. 1908. |
| ISLANDICA | II. | The Northmen in America (982-c. 1500), by Halldór Hermannsson. 1909. |
| ISLANDICA | III. | Bibliography of the Sagas of the Kings of Norway and related Sagas and Tales, by Halldór Hermannsson. 1910. |
| ISLANDICA | IV. | The Ancient Laws of Norway and Iceland, by Halldór Hermannsson. 1911. |
| ISLANDICA | V. | Bibliography of the Mythical-Heroic Sagas, by Halldór Hermannsson. 1912. |
| ISLANDICA | VI. | Icelandic Authors of to-day, with an appendix giving a list of works dealing with Modern Icelandic Literature, by Halldór Hermannsson. 1913. |
| ISLANDICA | VII. | The Story of Griselda in Iceland, edited by Halldór Hermannsson. 1915. |
| ISLANDICA | VIII. | An Icelandic Satire (Lof Lýginnar). By Þorleifur Halldórsson. Edited by Halldór Hermannsson. 1915. |
| ISLANDICA | IX. | Icelandic Books of the Sixteenth Century, by Halldór Hermannsson. 1916. |

- ISLANDICA X. *Annalium in Islandica farrago and De mirabilibus Islandiæ*, by Bishop Gíslí Oddsson. Edited by Halldór Hermannsson. 1917.
- ISLANDICA XI. *The Periodical Literature of Iceland down to the year 1874. An historical sketch* by Halldór Hermannsson. 1918.

There have also been issued:

- CATALOGUE of the Icelandic Collection bequeathed by Willard Fiske. Compiled by Halldór Hermannsson. Ithaca, N. Y., 1914. 4° pp. viii + 755.
- CATALOGUE of Runic Literature forming a part of the Icelandic Collection bequeathed by Willard Fiske. Compiled by Halldór Hermannsson. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1917. 4° pp. viii + (2) + 106, 1 pl.

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1919

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AN ESSAY
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MODERN ICELANDIC

When the Norwegian colonists settled in Iceland during the ninth and tenth centuries they found the country unoccupied, if we except the few Irish anchorites who had established themselves there on the southeastern coast, and who soon left, since they were unwilling to live together with heathen people. Thus the Norwegian tongue received no admixture in the new home from native sources; though a few Celtic words were introduced by the colonists who came from or by way of the British Islands and Ireland, but most of these disappeared again from the language. The physical conditions of the country were similar to those of the Norwegian home of the settlers, if anything less multiform, and hence required the same or even a more restricted vocabulary. The change of abode consequently had little influence upon the richness of the language, as there was no need for neologisms or expressions for new and previously unknown conditions. The dialect which became prevalent in Iceland was that of the southwestern districts of Norway, whence the greater number of the settlers came. The language of this early period is known from the oldest skaldic and Eddic poems,¹ and probably differed in no perceptible degree from the tongue as spoken in Norway at the time. There soon developed, however, various peculiarities in the speech of the Icelanders, which distinguished them from their kinsmen in Norway. These changes, slight in the beginning, grew and became more distinct and numerous as time went on, and are noticeable in the earliest literary records, but it was long until they reached such a stage as to make difficult the intercourse between the two peoples.

The introduction of Christianity in the beginning of the eleventh century required new additions to the vocabulary, bringing as it did a foreign cult and new religious ideas and doctrines for which there were no terms in the ancient tongue. To meet this it was necessary either to borrow the foreign words,

¹ See Finnur Jónsson, *Det norsk-islandske Skjaldesprog omtr. 800-1300*. København, 1901, 8°, pp. 123+ (3).

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