"Ireland" (Alfred's "Orosius," I, 1)

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MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

I. 'IRALAND' (ALFRED'S 'OROSIUS,' I, 1).

EDITORS of Alfred's *Orosius* have usually regarded the above word in the account of Ohthere's voyage southward along the west coast of the Scandinavian peninsula as a mistake. The assumption has been that Ireland could not have been referred to for geographical reasons, and because the name Ireland was not used so early. On the other hand Ch. Fr. Dahlmann, in his *Forschungen auf dem Gebiete der Geschichte*, I, 443 (1822), argued for the manuscript reading against Rask's contention for *Isaland* 'Iceland.' Dahlmann emphasizes that early geographers, as Ptolemy and Strabo¹, placed Ireland farther north than its real position, and thus in more direct line from the Scandinavian peninsula. It is no greater error, one may recall, than when Caesar in his *Commentaries* makes the south-western corner of England 'point toward Spain.' Early writers on geography, lacking accurate measurement of distance and direction, often seem grossly inaccurate to-day. Yet our own geographical notions often need equal rectification. It is with something like a shock that we learn the general course of the Panama canal is from west to east, or that the extreme point of Alaska is farther west of San Francisco than the latter is west of New York.

Dahlmann also cites Adam of Bremen for a statement regarding the geography of Ireland and Scandinavia exactly like that of Ohthere to Alfred. The sentence may well be quoted from the fourth book of the *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*, ch. 10 :

Ab Aquilone vero idem Oceanus insulas praeterlabitur Orchadas, deinde infinitis orbem terrae spaciis ambit, sinistrorsum habens Hyberniam, Scotorum patriam, quae nunc Irland dicitur, dextrorsum vero scopulos Nordmanniae, ulterius autem insulas Island, Gronland ; ibi terminatur Oceanus, qui dicitur caligans².

¹ This is especially true of Strabo, see Spruner-Menke, *Atlas Antiquus*. Beazley, *Dawn of Modern Geography*, II, 546, adds Solinus to Ptolemy and Strabo.

² I quote from Lappenberg's text in *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum*, a somewhat better one than that before Dahlmann. In the Migue edition *Irland* is printed *Island*, evidently by mistake.

The description, it will be noticed, reverses the directions of Ohthere's voyage, but specifies the same relative positions of Scandinavia, Ireland and the Orchades (Orkneys). Otherwise, though written a century later, it confirms in a striking way the Alfredian *Orosius*. Moreover, Dahlmann answers the objection that Ohthere intended Scotland rather than Ireland by showing that while Ireland was sometimes called Scotland, the reverse was not true in such cases as could be used for argument on this passage.

To Dahlmann's excellent argument for the manuscript reading may be added some minor notes. First, *Iraland* occurs twice in the manuscript and the reading is unusually clear. Then *Island*, not *Isaland*, would be the natural form of the name, and *Island* could not have been confused with *Iraland* simply by a misreading of *s* as *r*. Again, the more direct route from Scandinavia to Ireland was around the northern part of Scotland, and this might easily have given the idea that Ireland was relatively nearer to Scandinavia than we know it to be.

Finally, and the point seems not to have been sufficiently considered in its bearings, Iceland was not discovered by the Norsemen until about 850, and not settled until after 872, that is until after Alfred came to the throne. While there was sufficient time for it to become known in England before the Alfredian *Orosius* was translated, there is no evidence that it was so known. There is no reference to it in *Orosius* or the *Chronicle*, and the English word *Island* first appears more than three centuries later in Layamon's *Brut*, 22467—an earlier reference than that of line 22622 given in the *New Eng. Dict.* On the other hand Ireland had been known to the Norsemen for nearly a century and settled almost as long, so that the use of the name by a Norseman would not have been in the least strange. This, too, even if Ireland was usually called Hibernia, or Scotland, by the English. The name Ireland (*Yrland*) also appears in later English considerably before that of Iceland, as in the F text of the *Chronicle* (891), the manuscript of which is of the late eleventh or early twelfth century. It is worth noting that if the entry could be as old as the date assigned, it would correspond closely with the probable time of making the *Orosius* translation and the entry under discussion.

It would seem, then, that the manuscript reading, *Iraland*, in Alfred's *Orosius* i, 1, can be amply supported, and that the burden of proof clearly remains with those proposing a change.

II. 'TRĒSON' ('TREASON').

In *Mod. Lang. Notes*, VII, 254 (1892), I proposed to read the *Chronicle* entry under 1135, which Thorpe transliterated *þa wes tre sona þas landes* and Earle-Plummer *þe westre sona þas landes*, as *þa wes treson a þas landes*, 'there was treason in these lands.' This was at once accepted by Plummer in a personal letter, and in 1899 given in his *Notes* (*Saxon Chronicles*, II, 307). In Kluge's *Mittelenglisches Lesebuch* (1904) it is suggested in the *Glossar* under *westre*, with Schröer's name added. Why Schröer's name should have been used I do not know, and it has been omitted in the 'zweite Auflage' (1912).

At the time I suggested the emendation, by which this new romance word in English form emerges for the first time, no facsimile of that part of the manuscript was known to me and I had not seen the original. The publication some years ago of *Angelsächsische Palaeographie* by Wolfgang Keller made accessible a photographic reproduction of this part of the Laud manuscript, and allows a new judgment of the reasonableness of the reading. It shows that the words of this entry were written with almost no separation, often actually none, so that the passage looks like *þawestresonapaslendes*. This renders even more probable the division I formerly proposed, and I think no one with the facsimile or the manuscript before him can doubt the correctness of the emendation.

The form *a* = *an* 'in' may be from loss of *n*, as I formerly suggested, and illustrated, or from absence of the breve above the letter to indicate *n*, since the breve is often used by this writer as by others. In any case this passage furnishes a clear example of the French word *treason* (*trĕson*) in English almost a century before the earliest example cited by the *New Eng. Dict.* The latter's example, too, *treison* from the *Ancren Riwele*, does not show the monophthong necessary to account for our modern word and common enough in the Midland dialect. For its phonology see Behrens, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der französischen Sprache in England*, p. 133.

III. 'AFTERDINER,' 'AFTERMETE,' 'AFTERSOPER.'

In Skeat's very full Glossarial Index to his *Works of Chaucer* (1894), as well as in that accompanying his *Student's Chaucer* (1895), he gives the compound preposition *at-after*, with references to six places in the Poems. In these six places in the text the preposition is also printed *at-after*. Such a form is alone surprising enough, since no such

compound preposition occurs in Old English or the Modern period. Nor has any other editor followed Skeat in this form, although no editor of Chaucer has correctly printed the compound nouns with *after* which the simple preposition *at* governs in these and other places.

The first of these, *afterdiner*, occurs in the *Shipman's Tale*, 255 (B 1445), and the *Franklin's Tale*, 190 (F 918):

At afterdiner Daun John sobrelly ;

At afterdiner goume they to daunce.

The second, *aftermete* 'aftermeat,' occurs in the *Merchant's Tale*, 677 (E 1921):

At aftermete ye with your wommen alle.

The third, *aftersoper* 'aftersupper,' also occurs twice, in the *Squire's Tale*, 294 (F 302), and in the *Franklin's Tale*, 491 (F 1219):

At aftersoper gooth this noble king ;

At aftersoper fille they in trete.

That these words are true compounds we might infer from the frequency of such forms in Old English. Thus the Toller-Bosworth *Dictionary* gives eighteen compounds with *after* as the first part in a similar sense. For Modern English the *Century Dictionary* has thirty-two such compounds, not all in common use at present, but all recorded in works of some period. Shakespeare alone has thirteen such compounds with *after*. Two of Chaucer's three compounds are found in Elizabethan English and recorded in the *New Eng. Dict.* Thus *afterdinner* as a plural is part of the title in Sandford's *Houres of Recreation or Afterdinner* (1576), and the word is found as a genitive in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, III, i, 33, and *Troilus*, II, iii, 121. The expressions there are 'an afterdinner's sleep,' and 'an afterdinner's breath,' where we should now use *afterdinner* as an adjective—'an afterdinner speech.' Shakespeare has also *aftersupper* as a noun in *Midsummer*, V, 34:

Between our aftersupper and bedtime,—

a use exactly like that of Chaucer.

Both *afterdiner* and *aftersoper* are analogical compounds with a second French element, proof enough of the frequency and influence of such forms in Middle English, although only nine such words are recorded by Maetzner. He has omitted all these Chaucer examples, except that he says under *at*:

In Verbindung mit einem durch *after* bestimmten Begriffe verhält sich *at* wie zu einem einfachen Zeitbegriffe.

He then cites *at after soper* (*Franklin's Tale*, 491) without indicating composition, and *att after Easter* from Halliwell's *Dict. of Archaic Words*, where *aftereaster* is as much a true compound as the other words. The above *aftermete* 'aftermeat,' which may be the oldest of all since a true English compound, is not recorded in any dictionary. Incidentally, the first examples in Chaucer, *afterdiner*, *aftersoper*, are the earliest uses of the words so far noted, antedating the examples in the *New Eng. Dict.* by about two centuries, while *aftermete*, *aftereaster*, also deserve to be recorded in that compendium of lexicography. As colloquial words we should not expect to find them often in books. Whether the forms should be written with a hyphen or not is another matter, but the proper stress is better suggested by the close compound, as in *afterglow*, *aftermath*, *afterpiece*¹.

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'A GOOD KISSING CARRION' ('HAMLET' II, 2, 182).

In modern texts of *Hamlet* there has been a general rejection of Warburton's emendation of *God* for *good* in Hamlet's unfinished sentence, 'For if the sun breeds maggots in a dead dog, being a *god* kissing carrion,—'; and a return to the quarto-folio reading of '*good* kissing carrion.' This rejection of Warburton's emendation and of his interpretation accompanying it has been, I believe, not because this interpretation does not offer an explanation satisfactory in itself, but because it is unaccompanied by *proof* that such an explanation was the obvious meaning of Hamlet's words to Shakespeare's contemporaries. It is the purpose of this note to point out that Warburton's interpretation of this passage receives support from the fact that the idea of the sun breeding maggots in a dead body was used by sixteenth and seventeenth century writers, as Hamlet uses it, to describe the general depravity of mankind.

Warburton's explanation of the passage in question identifies the carrion, corrupting under the rays of the sun, with man, 'dead in

¹ In reviewing *Poems of Sir John Salusbury and Robert Chester* (*Mod. Lang. Rev.*, ix, 533), Professor G. C. Moore Smith suggested an emendation, *after* for the printed *astor*, which probably reveals another early example of *afterdinner*. On p. xvi of the *Introduction* occurs the entry: 'David Salusbury the sonne of John Salusbury of lleweny Esquier was borne upon Tuesday the 19 of August about 2 of the Clocke in the astor Dinn'. [1600.] Professor Smith also furnishes me another example from Wallace's *Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 58: 'from...Sunday at supper...until the 8th of September being Sunday at after dinner.' [1566.]