

poetry have indicated many curious points of internal evidence which certainly seem to indicate the influence of a sojourn among the Hebrides, upon the people by whom the Eddas in their present form have been handed down to us.¹ So far as regards geological structure and scenery, the western fringe of Norway and the Hebridean region of Scotland are singularly alike. Hence much of the local colouring of native poetry would be the same in either case. But in Norway, the background of snow-clad, forest-covered mountains makes a fundamental difference in the scenery of the two regions. And I think we can trace the influence of this difference so certainly in the Eddaic poems as to warrant the conviction that originally these compositions had their birth in the Scandinavian north, but could not have arisen in Scotland; and that any traces of Hebridean influence must be due to the effects of a prolonged sojourn in the north-west Highlands upon a people who brought their ballads and songs with them from the north. I cannot believe that the mythology of Odin and Thor, of the Frost Giants, the Mud Giants, the Rock Giants, the Wind Giants, of Nifelheim and Muspelheim, the regions of torrid heat and of snow and ice, could ever have been conceived among the Western Islands of Scotland. Neither the scenery nor the climate would suggest them there. But, on the other hand, they are just the conceptions that might be inspired by the rugged mountains, the snow-fields, and glaciers, the brief hot summers, and the long, dark chilly, winters, the storms, avalanches, landslips, and waterfalls of the Sogne and the Hardanger, and the earthquakes, volcanoes, and geysirs of Iceland.

Again, the well-known contrast in style and treatment

¹ *Corpus Poeticum Boreale, the Poetry of the old Northern Tongue*, by Gudbrand Vigfusson and F. York Powell. 2 vols. Oxford, 1883.