

enrich them with fresh contributions of their own, in spite of all the dreadful calamities that have poured in upon them.

Historical writing has never wholly died out in Iceland. From the end of the thirteenth and well into the nineteenth century we have an unbroken succession of *annals*, of which there are now no less than 50–60 different collections written by as many authors; and as it not infrequently happens that two or more of these annals cover the same period of time, they are complementary, and contain an enormous mass of information about the history of our country. From them as the main source professor *Thoroddsen* has, for instance, compiled a book on the weather conditions in Iceland during a thousand years (900–1900), showing that more or less is known about the weather for 525 of these 1000 years (of the first 500 years 31 per cent. are known; of the latter 500, 74 per cent.). But our greatest annalistic writer is district judge *Jón Espólin* (1769–1836). His historical Annals of Iceland (*Íslands Árbækur í söguformi*) in twelve large volumes (published 1821–1855) contain a brief history of Iceland from 1262–1832. But besides the annals there has been a steady flow of *biographies* from the Reformation onwards. Dean *Jón Halldórsson* (1665–1736) wrote the *Lives of the Schoolmasters at Skálholt* (*Skólameistarar í Skálholti*); the *Annals of the Governors of Iceland* (*Hirðstjóraannáll*), etc. *Bogi Benediktsson* (1771–1849) wrote the *Lives of the District Judges* (*Sýslumannaæfir*). In addition to this there is a number of individual ‘Lives’, some of the best of which are autobiographies. Many of our peasants have, both in the past and the present, made no small contributions to our historical literature. *Genealogy* has gone hand in hand with history, so that almost everybody can have his pedigree traced into the eighteenth century, and many much farther back, even to the first colonists of the country. The Icelanders have also composed remarkable *historical works in Latin* for the benefit of foreign scholars. First among these is *Arngrímur Jónsson* the “learned” (1568–1648) who wrote a number of books about Iceland and its history; *Thormóður Torfason* (Torfaeus, 1636–1719) wrote *Historia rerum Norvegicarum* and many other works. Bishop *Finnur Jónsson* (1704–1789) is the author of *Historia ecclesiastica Islandiæ*, in 4 vols. Of those who have devoted themselves to historical research in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, we should mention *Jón Sigurðsson*, *Jón Thorkelsson*, *Thorvaldur Thoroddsen*, *Valtýr Guðmundsson*, *Bogi Th. Melsted*, *Hannes Thorsteinsson*, *Jón J. Aðils*, and *Páll Eggert Ólason*.