

overlooking the obvious inconsistency of the two assertions with each other, since idealism assumes that things exist only in the mind, independently of which, as it claims, they have no existence, thereby making mind not merely the measure of the universe, but the universe itself. Were he to execute his fond hypothetical resolve, he would jump out of the frying-pan into the fire; and there is no telling what he might or might not do if he should ever "discover" that he is in the frying-pan.

However, we do not hold a brief for "the beast materialism." Our client in this case is the jewel consistency; in whose favor we now ask the opinion of the court, Prof. Huxley, it is plain, having failed to sustain his demurrer. The opinions which he fathers, if the court please, are all resolvable into materialism; and, now and here, have been so resolved. His demurrer, we submit, must be overruled.

AMERICA DISCOVERED AND CHRISTIANIZED IN THE TENTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES.

THE intelligent reader of current public events in this country cannot have failed to notice frequent occurrences of late, which point to the discovery and colonization of the western continents, and parts of our own country, and the introduction of Christianity therein, five hundred years before the achievement of the great deeds by which Columbus brought the two continents almost face to face. On one day we read in the public prints of the unveiling in a great northwestern American city of a statue of Leif Ericson, the Northman, discoverer of America in the tenth century. We next read of the inauguration of a similar monument in honor of the same hero at Boston. And to-day we read a petition presented to the American Congress at its present session, asking that in the approaching celebration of the centenary of the Constitution, in 1889, a public and national recognition be made of the events commemorated by the Viking's statues at Milwaukee and Boston. This petition is signed by eminent scientists, antiquarians and historians in every part of our country, and to it we see appended the signatures of the leading officers and members of the Historical Societies of Vermont, New Hampshire, Virginia and other States; of General James Grant Wilson and other members of the Genealogical and Bio-

graphical Society of New York; of such artists as Daniel Huntington, Church, Moran, Brown, and others; of professors in our leading universities, and of many other most eminent and learned Americans. It is thus clear that the claim of Norse discoveries on this continent has entered into the living and current national traditions and life of our people. The learned few, the instructors of our people, seem satisfied and convinced. It is time now for this learning to be popularized and given to the people. The masses of our people must hear and judge. The present writer long ago investigated this claim of the Northmen and became convinced. It is proper first to state what achievements are claimed for the Northmen as the discoverers of our country, and this claim we will now state. The historical evidences in proof of the claim will be presented afterwards.

In the case of Columbus, who made a masterly and exhaustive study of the history of navigation before and up to his time, of the voyages of discovery before then achieved, of the traditions of the classic times in relation to the existence of continents beyond the then inhabited globe, as well as of more modern voyages, and had also explored the field scientifically as well as historically, there was an exact theory, a mass of direct and resultant information, and a firm conviction that, if afforded the means, he would discover the then unknown countries. We will refer again to this subject in another part of this article. But in the case of the Northmen no such methods were followed. The discovery made by them was in its very earliest stages the immediate result of accident; in the second stages the result of their love for the sea and habits of adventure and sea-roving; and in the third stages the result of their natural inclination to follow up the results thus attained. They were the most adventurous people of the world at that time, the most skilful and determined navigators, the most likely people of all nations to make the discovery of the lands lying so accessible beyond the Atlantic Ocean. Mr. Edward Everett justly remarked of them: "It is plain that no achievement of naval adventure, related of such a people, can be considered beyond the line of probability."

The Northmen, wandering fragments of Asiatic tribes, after traversing Europe, found a home and founded a nation in Norway, only when the sea arrested their progress. Here they achieved a permanent conquest and founded the mother country, from whose sea-indented shores proceeded so many expeditions pregnant with the fate of nations. The Orkneys, the Ferroës, Shetland and other distant lands and islands became familiar to these rovers of the seas. In 860, Naddod, a Norwegian pirate, on his voyage to the Ferroës, was carried far out of his course by a tempest, and this

accident led to his discovery of Iceland, the *Ultima Thule* of the ancients. This ice-clad island became a colony of the mother country. About the year 900 Rollo made the conquest of Normandy. In 1060 we find a Norman prince established in Apulia. In 1066 William the Conqueror becomes the master and King of England, and founds the present dynasty of Great Britain. It will thus be seen that the Northmen were at the height of their power and activity when they discovered and colonized portions of the Western Continent in the tenth century.

The despotism of the Kings of Norway drove from the country many of the bravest, boldest and most independent of the leaders and their families. Harold Haarfagr (the Fair-haired) determined to make himself sole monarch of Norway. The ambition of one of Norway's fairest and proudest daughters stimulated his own. Enamored of Ragna Adilsdatler (the daughter of Adil), he proposed to make her his queen; but she answered that the man she married would have to be King of all Norway. He gallantly and proudly accepted this challenge of love and ambition. After twelve years' hard fighting, during which time he would neither cut nor comb the fair hair for which he was so celebrated, he succeeded in conquering all Norway and thereby in winning his queen. At the battle of Hafersfjord, in 872, he consolidated the thirty-one small republics of that Spartan country into the united Kingdom of Norway. The proud families of the former republics would not submit to the harsh and tyrannical measures of this rude and iron-clad conqueror. Many of the leading men and families of the country were either expelled or voluntarily expatriated themselves. Some went to the Hebrides, some to the Orkneys, and others to the Shetland and Ferroë Islands. Iceland, which had been discovered by the famous Norse Viking Naddod, in 860, became a favorite asylum of most of these bold and unconquered refugees, on account of its remoteness and consequent security. Thus Iceland became a colony of Norway, and ultimately a dependence of the mother country. Among the voluntary exiles from Norway who settled in Iceland was Gunnbjorn, Ulf Krage's Son, a bold rover of the sea, who, in 876, was driven out to sea in a tempest, and discovered the white cliffs far to the west of Iceland, and bordering the eastern coast of Greenland. They received the name of Gunnbjorn's Rocks. Similar reports were heard from time to time from other mariners, and the imagination of these bold sea kings heightened the romance of the discovery. "Sailors' yarns" of great and marvellous details were spread and became traditional. One of these dread adventurers, Hollow Geit, claimed that he had gone thither over the ices with an Icelandic she-goat, had seen gigantic oaks covered with acorns

as large as men, and rocks of ice that shivered the ships in their passage.

Among the Northmen who went into exile from Norway was Thorwald, son of Oswald and grandson of Ulvi. His son Eric the Red had taken part in some disturbances in Norway, and was probably compelled to fly from punishment, for he had killed his man. Thus Norwald and his son Eric went together and settled in Iceland, and founded the settlement of Hornstrand. After the death of his father, another manslaughter by Eric caused him to feel the necessity for another emigration, for he was now condemned to another exile, and as he had heard so much of Gunnbjorn's Rocks, he determined to go in search of them and of the country foreshadowed by them as probably being not far distant. Accordingly in the spring of 984, he fitted out his ship and sailed in the direction given for Gunnbjorn's Rocks. He was accompanied by another prominent Icelander, Heriulf Bardson, a man of wealth and influence. He passed the famous Rocks and discovered the eastern shores of that vast body of land now known as Greenland. The land was found in the 64th degree of latitude. He landed and gave the name of Midjokel to the place, which means mountain in the midst of ice. He saw masses of rocks and ice commingled; and as the ices descended to the sea they became united to the already vast icebergs, and presented to the eye barriers at once fearful and grandly beautiful.

Eric faltered not, but pressed his brave ship southward, doubled Cape Farewell, and with his mind teeming with visions of fame and colonization, settled at the fiôrd Igalikko, which he called Eric's fiôrd. He erected a vast building at Brattahlida, availing himself of the rock palisade for one of its walls, and here with his colony he established himself. When Jorgensen in more recent times discovered the ruins of this vast pile, they seemed like the remnants of a town and showed evidences of immense toil in its construction. Eric's voyage westward from Iceland had awakened great hopes among the Icelanders, ever ready by their national tastes and habits to seek adventure, for Eric had promised to seek a land that was, unlike Gunnbjorn's Rocks, suitable for human habitation. Eric, on his part, was as skilful in schemes of colonization as many of our own contemporaries. He said to himself, if this country has a fine and attractive name, it will draw the unwary adventurer and colonist hither. So he called this bleak and ice-clad land by a name more suited to Florida. It was he that bestowed upon it the suggestive name of Greenland. He spent the winter at Ericseya, and it was in the following year, 985, that he settled at Brattahlida, after having spent the summer in exploring the western coast and in giving names to many places. In the

second year of his residence in Greenland his colonization schemes began to succeed, and having returned to Iceland to promote the movement, he returned to Greenland in 986, with no less than thirty-five Icelandic ships with colonists for the new country discovered by him. Of these only fourteen ships arrived in safety; the others were swallowed up in the waves and ice. Thus a new and independent state sprang up far beyond what had been considered the habitable globe. As Iceland was at this time a republic, so the community of Icelanders in Greenland modelled their political institutions after those of Iceland. By these events the United States loses the prestige of having been the first republic established in the western hemisphere. The population of Greenland increased as rapidly as its harsh and repellant climate would permit. Indeed no other people than the Northmen, the hardiest of Europeans, could have succeeded in making a settlement on those inhospitable shores. Not only Icelanders, but Norsemen from Norway, emigrated in considerable numbers to Greenland, and a flourishing colony was established, and trade between the colony and Iceland and Norway became permanent. The town of Ericsfiörd became a prosperous and somewhat populous place. Explorations were made along the coasts and new settlements established. It is not known how far to the north these explorations and settlements extended, but a pillar inscribed with Runic characters in 1135, on one of the Woman's Islands on the east shore of Baffin's Bay, and found there in 1824 by Sir Edward Parry, proves that one of their expeditions went as far up as Upernavik, in latitude $72^{\circ} 50'$, and made a clearance there, if not a settlement. Eric and his companions found no previous human being or native races inhabiting the country, for no mention is made of the Esquimaux, or Skrälings, as the Northmen called them, in those extreme northern regions, in any of the ancient manuscripts until the fourteenth century. The towns or settlements extending from and around and beyond Ericsfiörd were called Ostre Bygd (or east country or shore) and Westre Bygd (or west country or shore). Modern investigations and discoveries of the ruins of Norse structures have clearly proven that both settlements were on the west coast, the Ostre Bygd being the southern settlement, and the Westre Bygd being the northern settlement.

The Northmen had never failed in any of their undertakings, and the success of the Greenland colony was in keeping with their history. It is certain that at one time there existed and flourished no less than three hundred farms and villages in Greenland, extending from Cape Farewell to Disco. In 1261 Greenland had been claimed as politically, as well as socially and by consanguinity, be-

longing to Norway, and with regret became subject to the mother country. From that remote period to the present time, none of the land-pirating nations of Europe, which have extended their conquests into Africa and Asia as far as India, to say nothing of their American acquisitions, have ever coveted this crystal, icy gem, which still glitters in the crown of Norway. Not only did Greenland wax strong and prosperous as a Norwegian colony, but the Christian religion gained a firm foothold in the country. Churches and monasteries were erected and maintained for centuries, and Greenland became the seat of a Catholic bishopric, and had a succession of seventeen bishops. We propose to defer the consideration of the ecclesiastical history of Greenland and Vinland to a future time, when in a separate article we will trace the progress of this most interesting branch of our subject. For the present we conclude our notice of Greenland proper with a brief reference to the extinction of the colonies, the history of which is buried in mystery and darkness. Crantz, himself a Norwegian, in his "History of Greenland," repels with indignation the thought that so miserable a race as the Esquimaux, whom the Northmen contemptuously called *Skrælings*, could have been "capable of overmatching the Norwegians, a nation of conquerors, invading their populous colonies, barricaded as they were by craggy rocks, and destroying them root and branch, so that not a living vestige of them is now to be found." Nor does he find in the annals of the race any accounts of war. He attributes the principal cause of the extermination of the Greenland colonies to pestilence. A plague, known as the *Black Death*, ravaged some of the fairest portions of Europe, destroying not only man and beast, and all living things, but even the very roots of trees, and shrubs and herbage withered away under its poisonous breath. Commerce between Greenland and Norway, and the constant passage of vessels between the two countries, must have easily brought the infection across the ocean. The severity of the climate and the absence of the finer comforts of wealth and civilization and of good medical treatment, gave easier spread to the plague, which decimated the population and greatly reduced their strength and numbers. The more northern settlements, becoming depleted by disease, were probably abandoned, and the entire colony became finally congregated in the southern, or *Ostre Bygd*. The savages increased in numbers and in territory as the Norwegians were reduced. Finally, the plague left but little for the savages to accomplish. Still there are shreds of history that lead us to the belief that their extinction was not sudden or entire. Remnants of the colony must have survived the *Black Death*, and these probably amalgamated with the natives, and gradually lost all individuality. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries at-

tempts were made to discover the lost colonies, and in 1721 the Danish missionary, Hans Egede, succeeded in establishing himself at Godthaab, but his congregations consisted only of Esquimaux. The Northmen were gone.

Soon afterwards the Moravian Mission was founded and continues to the present day; and the settlements have increased. The sites of the colonies of the ancient Northmen have now been thoroughly identified; the ruins of the churches and other structures of the Catholic Northmen of the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries have been found and identified with certainty; and it is now demonstrated beyond a doubt that Igallikoford or Ericsford was the site of the long-lost colony of Eric the Red. Learned societies in Europe and America are making daily progress in elucidating the history, the geography, and the antiquities of the Greenland of the Northmen. The historical societies of New England, the Royal Society of Northern Antiquarians at Copenhagen, and the Société des Americanistes in France and other countries are among the foremost laborers in this interesting field. The *Antiquitates Americanae*, by Professor Rafn, published at Copenhagen in the ancient Norse language, in modern Danish, and in Latin, in 1837, gives illustrations of the monuments and ruins now remaining to attest this history, and *fac similes* of the manuscripts that recount its details. Greenland was the base of operations for the Norse explorations and discoveries of unknown shores. We will now proceed to give the results of the latter.

Bjarn Heriulfson was the Norse discoverer of the first land of our continent. A glance at the map of the world will show to the most casual observer how closely together in those northern regions the lands lie. Iceland is not far from Norway; Greenland is not far from Iceland; and from Greenland to Labrador, from Labrador to Nova Scotia, from Nova Scotia to New England, the transit by sea is short and easy. Considering the wonderful maritime genius of the Northmen, it is a matter of surprise that these discoveries were not sooner made. The discovery of Iceland by Naddod was in some respects an accident, for a tempest carried him off his course from the Ferroë islands to Iceland. The discovery of the rocky sea-borders of Greenland by Gunnbjorn was, in some respects, an accident, for he too was carried out to sea by a storm. So the discovery of the American coasts by Bjarn was, in some respects, an accident, for, in search of Greenland, he stumbled on New England. Yet there was method in all these accidents. Discovery, colonization and traffic were the ideas that, after all, guided the ships of the Northmen. They were so accustomed to visit lands and islands, living out at sea and out of the beaten track of navigation, such as Iceland, Shetland, Ferroë, and the Ork-

neys, that Greenland, and the lands to the south, including our own shores, seemed to them but no distant parts of the same system or chain of islands. To them such events were commonplace. But to the philosophical and religious mind of Columbus the same events were a solution of the earth's geography, a continent given to civilization, a new world to Christendom.

Among the companions of Eric in his voyage of discovery from Iceland to Greenland was Heriulf, an old mariner, who had become a large land owner and settler in Iceland. He too, like Eric, made a home in Greenland. His son, Bjarn, continued his commercial voyages, and was trading at some distant mart when his father went to Greenland with Eric. His custom always had been to return from his voyages in time to spend the winter with his father. The ancient chronicles describe this youth as brave, generous, and promising beyond example. His devotion to his father was in keeping with his high and noble character. On returning to Iceland in 986, to spend the winter around the family hearth, he learned for the first time of his father's departure for distant lands to the west in company with Eric. He resolved at once not to unload his vessel, or even tarry for a short time, but to proceed at once over the unknown deep in search of his father, and in order to spend as usual the coming winter with him. No amount of expostulation could deter this young Viking from putting his daring purpose into execution. He had but the vaguest notion of the direction and situation of Greenland. He followed the guidance of the stars. His exploit is recounted in the Saga of Eric the Red, which states that he had good weather the first three days of his voyage. The polar currents must have carried him from the direct course, for he could have reached Greenland in three days. Tempests and thick mists now impeded his progress for several days and nights. When the sun appeared, he saw the outline of an unknown land, looming up like a blue cloud. Approaching and scanning the land, it was found to be covered with forests and furrowed with small hills. "This is not the land we seek," he said to his men, "for we are assured that the mountains of Greenland are high and covered with ice." Then heading to the north, he discovered, after a day and night's navigation, a level country covered with trees. Here his sailors desired to land in order to replenish their supplies of wood and water; but the young adventurer was in search of Greenland and his father. After three days' sailing they approached an island, all barren and intersected with glaciers, and passed it by. And again, after two days and nights of navigation in the open sea, they discovered another land, whose towering cliffs of eternal snow and ice broke in against a lowering sky. Here at once Bjarn recognized "Green-

land's icy mountains." Here they landed, and saw a boat at the shore. It happened that the place was not far from the residence of Heriulf, for it was called Heriulfness; and soon the father and son were embraced in each other's arms.

The circumstances of this remarkable voyage, its western direction from Iceland, its diversion to the southward, the courses of the wind and water currents, and the corresponding distances measured by the time of a sailing vessel, all unite in determining with fair and just accuracy the parts of the American coast that Bjarn saw and along which he sailed. The learned geographers and skilful critics, who have reviewed all these circumstances, have decided that the first land discovered was Nantucket, one degree south of Boston; that the second land discovered was Nova Scotia; and the third land was Newfoundland. There are certainly no other lands on a voyage approaching and reaching Greenland from the south that can be identified as the lands discovered by Bjarn.

Bjarn Heriulfson now abandoned seafaring and resided with his father the remainder of his life, spending most of the time in Greenland, occasionally visiting Iceland and Norway. Some years after his sailing along the American coasts, he visited Norway, and recounted his adventures to some of the most intelligent and influential men of the country. Jarl Eric, who was present, and others, censured his indifference to the importance of his discovery, blamed him for not going ashore and exploring the country. His narratives, however, added to the enthusiasm already created in Norway and Iceland by the discovery and colonization of Greenland.

Now a new element entered into the wonderful forces which formed the startling character of the Northmen. Olaf Trygvason, the king of Norway, became converted to Christianity towards the end of the tenth century. His zeal for the conversion of his subjects knew no bounds. He made vast tours through the country accompanied by Christian missionaries, for the diffusion of the new religion. Military escorts also accompanied this royal missionary, and it is said that the shrines and altars of Odin fared roughly at his hands. So great was the respect of the Northmen for power and strength and force, that the energy and power with which the king supplemented the milder arguments of the missionaries, resulted in the conversion of Norway to Christianity. An expedition to Iceland, accompanied with missionaries, had the same result. Now that Greenland was the object of so much attention, the convert-king desired to bestow also on his Greenland countrymen the blessings of Christianity. Eric, the founder of Greenland, had two sons, who were among the most intelligent and promising of the rising men of the time and country, Leif and Thon-

stein. The latter remained with his father, who was then in Iceland. Leif was on a visit to the court of Olaf, where the Christian influences of the royal household and of the zealous missionaries led to his conversion to the new faith. He was also ambitious of renown, and sought glory in adventure and discovery. Having heard the accounts which Bjarn gave of the new and unknown lands lying to the south of Greenland, and yet remaining unexplored, he coveted the fame of becoming their explorer and colonizer. In this purpose he purchased the ship of Bjarn, enlisted thirty-five sailors for the voyage, and prepared to sail in quest of the southern lands. The king also charged him with the still more glorious mission of introducing Christianity into Greenland, and appointed a priest and several other holy men, "*sacri ordinis*," as the Icelandic Sagas state, to go out to Greenland on the same voyage with Leif. The voyage was made successfully by following the directions of Bjarn, and trusting to his knowledge of the stars. Eric, his father, yielded at first to his entreaty, and consented to accompany the expedition, in order to favor it with his experience and prudence, as well as by the good luck his presence was in the opinion of the sailors thought to bring. Eric was still a pagan, and as it was a part of the belief of the followers of Odin that they enjoyed in Valhalla the wealth they had amassed in this world, he securely hid his treasure, mounted his horse and started to ride to the shore where the ship was anchored. On his way to the ship his horse stumbled and Eric was thrown to the ground, and, though not seriously hurt, he construed the accident as an omen sent from Odin warning him not to embark. But Leif, with a brave soul and Christian faith, rejecting the pagan superstitions in which he had been educated, and which he had now abjured, joyously sailed in his stout ship with his thirty-five sailors and the Christian missionaries sent to evangelize the pagan Greenlanders. This was in the year 1000. His was a veritable voyage of discovery. It was more—it was a mission of Christianity. No wonder that, in the chronicles of the Sagamen and Scalds, Leif has received the title of *The Fortunate*.

His voyage was unlike that of Bjarn; it was from north to south. He first saw a level country, stony, desolate, and encompassed with mountains of ice. He called it *Helluland*, or Stony Land, and in this description and location is recognized by modern critics our own Newfoundland. Thence steering southward he saw the second land discovered by Bjarn, with a low and hillock-shaped coast of white sand, with great forests in the background. This he called *Markland*, or *Woodland*, and in this we recognize the modern Nova Scotia.

Sailing again, and with a favorable wind from the northeast, he

reached in two days an island, "near which," as D'Avezac writes, "extends a peninsula to the east and north, just as Cape Cod is now seen to extend to the northeast behind the island of Nantucket." He passed through the narrow sound separating the main land from the islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, and describes the coast most accurately. He is now in regions unseen by Bjarn or any other European; the beautiful country entices him onward and southward; he enters Rhode Island bay and ascends Pocasset river. Here he and his companions landed, and, with ceremonies customary with the Scandinavians, took possession of the country. Some of the sailors light a large fire, and others explore the country, marking the trees and rocks with their axes as a guide for returning to the ship. Leif then caused trees to be cut, and large buildings were constructed which were called Leif's huts, *Leifsbudir*. He explores the country by sending each day half of his men inland, with strict injunctions not to separate, and to return each night to sleep at Leifsbudir.

One of the most enthusiastic among his men was a German named Tyrker, originally a captive, but subsequently the instructor and foster-father of Leif. One evening he was missing on the return of the exploring party of the day. Leif was much concerned on his account and reprimanded the others for returning without him. Leif with twelve men went in search of his foster-father, and soon found him. "Why, my foster-father," said Leif, "have you come so late, and why did you leave your companions?" Tyrker, on the contrary, was quite elated with his wanderings and with a discovery he had made. On the impulse of the moment he replied in his native German, which no one could understand, then, speaking in the Norse language, he said, "I have not been very far; I bring you in the meantime something new. I have discovered vines loaded with grapes." Leif, incredulous at such news, said, "Do you speak the truth, my foster father?" Tyrker replied, "I am sure that I speak the truth, because in my country there are vines in abundance."

And so it turned out upon subsequent investigation, and so to this day that region abounds with wild grapes. Leif then joyously called the country *Vinland*, the land of the vine. This romantic and striking circumstance gave great *éclat* to his discovery throughout the northern or Scandinavian parts of Europe. Adam of Bremen was told this circumstance in the next century by the King of Denmark.

The observations made of the country and climate accord with wonderful accuracy in locating Vinland the Good, of the Northmen, in the region near Newport, Rhode Island. The winter was spent at Leifsbudir, and in the spring Leif loaded his ships

with woods of rare beauty, with skins, and grapes, and sailed for Greenland. When he had got within sight of the mountains of Greenland, Leif had the happiness of rescuing from death five Norwegians, among whom was Thorer, first husband of Gudrid, who afterwards became celebrated in the annals of the Northmen in America.

This expedition of Leif was regarded as the most fortunate of all; for he had discovered Vinland the Good, had rescued five of his countrymen from death at sea, and had introduced Christianity into Greenland. The ecclesiastics who accompanied the expedition were the first Christian priests in that early age that visited America. They afterwards became the founders of the church of Greenland, which flourished for several centuries. The remains of its temples are now visited by adventurous tourists and are familiar to the Moravian missionaries of Greenland. Leif Ericson was thus the discoverer of our country.

The fame of Leif's success gave great stimulus to the Norwegian expeditions. Thorvald, the other son of Eric, and brother of Leif, was thrilled with the same ambition. Leif gave him the trusty and stout ship which had already visited the coast of the new lands twice; he also gave him permission to occupy the houses he had erected in Vinland, *Leifsbudir*, and added all his experiences and his wise counsels. Thorvald selected thirty men for the expedition, and sailed westward on the course of Bjarn and Leif in 1002. No difficulty was experienced in finding Vinland, for the route was now familiar, and Thorvald and his companions spent the winter in Leifsbudir, or Vinland the Good, our own Rhode Island. In the spring he caused a reconnaissance to be made of the country to the south. The small islands along the coast were visited, and on one of them they saw a small barn, the only sign of human occupation of the land. An island extending far towards the west was the limit of their southward explorations, and this was probably our own Long Island. In the ensuing summer Thorvald undertook to explore the coast to the northward. A violent storm broke the keel of his ship, and he remained a few days to make repairs. On resuming his course he said to his companions, "Let us raise upon this point of land a keel of a ship and give it the name of *Kialarnes*, or Cape of the Keel," and this was done accordingly. This point of land is now identified by modern critics and geographers as the Cape Cod, the Nauset of the Indians, situated in 42° of latitude. He next proceeded westward and landed near a promontory, which is now believed to be Gurnet Point, or Cape Allerton. So attractive was the surrounding country that Thorvald said on landing, "This country is very beautiful; I would wish to build here my

home." This remark proved to be fatally prophetic of his long and last resting place.

On returning to the ship they perceived three dark spots at the foot of the cliff, and on going to them they turned out to be carabos, or wicker boats, covered with skin, and under each were concealed three men. The Northmen were by education and national tradition adventurers, pirates and murderers, looking upon piracy and murder not as crimes, but as so many claims to distinction and honor in this world and in the Valhalla of the future life. The thought of conciliating the natives, of paving the way to their confidence and friendship, of opening the road to trade and colonization, or of availing themselves of their knowledge of the country and its resources, seemed never to enter into their plans or methods. Their first impulse was to seize and slaughter the natives found concealed under the carabos, an impulse no sooner felt than executed. One only escaped, and he could distinctly hear, above the splashing noise of the Northmen's boats as they returned to the ship, the cries of agony and death from his countrymen, as they were slaughtered and thrown into the deep sea. There were some Christians with the expedition, but probably few; it is hoped none took part in this slaughter; but Thorvald, who, by a sort of nuncupative will, directed his own tomb to be surmounted by the cross, emblem at once of redemption and mercy, did not, and probably could not, stay the red hand of massacre, nor save from knife or wave the unoffending natives. But the demon of carnage held him too as its hostage.

After the slaughter of the eight Esquimaux, or Skrælings, the Northmen explored the country around the promontory and the bay, and thought they saw what seemed like the habitations of men on the distant and elevated bank. Returning to their ship and eating the evening repast, all were speedily buried in slumber. But soon their sleep was disturbed by the din of war, there was no watch kept that night, and from the first to awake came the fearful cry, "Awake, Thorvald! Awake, Northmen! If you wish to save your lives, cut the cables and put to sea immediately!" On seizing their arms and rushing on deck the Northmen saw their ship surrounded by numerous carabos manned with natives, yelling for vengeance on the murderers of the morning, and, after the discharge of a cloud of arrows, the flotilla disappeared as suddenly as it came. The slaughter of the preceding morning was already avenged on the Northmen in the person of their chief. Thorvald was mortally wounded by an arrow, probably a poisoned one, which struck his shield, rebounded and penetrated his body under the arm. He announced to his companions his approaching death, advised his countrymen to depart from the shores which they had made fatal to themselves, and pointing to the

beautiful promontory, which he had so much admired as a place where he would like to build his home, he said, "I have foretold my lot; for I will rest there a long time. Bury me in this spot, and place two crosses on my grave, one at my head and the other at my feet, and in future this shall be called *Krossanes*, or Promontory of Crosses." These were Thorvald's expiring words. The prophecy was soon fulfilled, and the remains of the chieftain, one of the bravest of Vikings, were soon reposing under the two crosses he had directed his companions to erect at his head and feet. Returning to join the remainder of the expedition at Leifsbudir, in Vinland the Good, they recounted the sad end of their exploring expedition to their companions who had remained there. The Northmen spent the following winter, their third, in Vinland. In the next spring, 1005, they prepared to depart for Ericsfiord in Greenland. On this expedition, as well as in the preceding one of Leif, the Northmen must have gathered great quantities of wild grapes in the fall, and have dried them; for in the spring the ship was loaded with grapes. On arriving at Ericsfiord their first duty was to seek Leif, and announce to him the tragic death of his brother.

Within recent years a singular and romantic interest has attached to the death and burial place of Thorvald Ericson. In 1831 the skeleton of a warrior was found buried in the vicinity of Fall River, a *veritable skeleton in armor*. His sword was like those used by the Northmen, the breastplate also corresponded, and the Swedish chemist, Berzelius, analyzed a part of it and found it composed of the same metals used in the North during the tenth century. This relic attracted great attention at the time, and was the subject of much learned discussion among profound scholars, geographers, antiquarians, archæologists and historians. The silent warrior has never yet related his mysterious history. Well might the poet conjure him to tell his tale:

"Speak! Speak! thou fearful guest!"

One of the most beautiful poems of Longfellow, *The Skeleton in Armor*, commemorates the fate of Thorvald in the person of the Fall River warrior, and makes the son of Eric the Red relate his discoveries, claims the erection of the old tower at Newport as a Northman's work, relates his contempt of human life and of the human species, and his glorious entrance into Valhalla:

"Three weeks we westward bore,
And then the storm was o'er,
Cloud-like we saw the shore
Stretching to leeward;
There, for my lady's bower,
Built I the lofty tower
Which to this very hour
Stands looking seaward."

We will give the last two stanzas of this startling poem :

“ Still grew my bosom then,
Still as a stagnant fen,
Hateful to me were men,
 The sunlight hateful!
In the vast forest here
Clad in my warlike gear
Fell I upon my spear,
 Oh, death was grateful!

“ Thus seamed with many scars,
Bursting these prison bars,
Up to its native stars,
 My soul ascended.
There from the flowing bowl
Deep drinks the warrior's soul:
Skaal! to the Northland, skaal!
 Thus the tale ended.”

In the same summer Thorstein Ericson, third son of Eric the Red and brother of Leif and Thorvald, determined to go in search of his brother's remains. He fitted out a vessel, manned with twenty-five selected men, and started on his errand of fraternal piety. He was also accompanied by his wife, Gudrid, a woman remarkable in Norwegian chronicles for her beauty, dignity, prudence and Christian virtues, and also as the first among the Norse women that became a mother on our shores. The personal adventures and remarkable life of this the first of American mothers, ending in her spending an honored and pious widowhood in a convent at Rome, would deeply interest our readers if we had the opportunity of relating them here. This expedition was unsuccessful. The ship was tossed about all summer on the ocean. Finally they reached Lysefjord on the west coast of Greenland, where Thorstein and several of his men died. Gudrid then returned to Ericsfjord, in Greenland, and put herself under the protection of her brother-in-law, Leif, as head of the family.

The next and most remarkable of all the expeditions to Vinland was that which was undertaken by Thorfinn Karlsafne. This hero was descended from three families of kings. He was rich, powerful, capable and brave. He went to Greenland in 1006 and became the guest of Leif, at Brattahlid, in the very house that Eric had built. Eric was dead, and Leif was head of the family. At the Yule feast of the Northmen, now become the Christmas of the converted Greenlanders, Leif was disconsolate at his inability, in that distant and frozen land, to make good cheer; or, as he expressed it, to provide the necessary "good things" for a proper celebration of the great holy-days. Thorfinn,

perceiving this, played successfully the character of Santa Claus, and threw open the richly stocked store-houses of his vessels, and a *Merry Christmas* was celebrated in the stone castle, and indeed by the whole community. Gudrid must have lived in sorrowful retirement up to this time, for it was only during the Christmas festivities that Thorfinn saw her for the first time. They were noble and kindred spirits. The name of *Karlsafne*, which had been bestowed upon Thorfinn, signifies *destined to become great*; and, according to a ghost story related, in the Icelandic Sagas, of Gudrid's first husband, he arose from his bier in the midst of death and predicted a brilliant future for Gudrid. So when Thorfinn asked her hand of Leif, he answered, "Let her follow her destiny." The marriage took place in the winter of 1007, and formed an appropriate sequel to the Yule festivities.

Vinland had now become famous in Greenland story. In the long winter evenings its fabulous riches, its vast domains and forests, its beautiful waters, its spontaneous vineyards, and its magical climate were dwelt upon by Skald and Sagaman. The writer has seen, and will quote below, an ancient Latin poem, of Scandinavian authorship, in which Vinland is described as a mighty empire with three kings. The Esquimaux and their chiefs would scarcely realize that they had been the subject of so grand an epic in the classic language of Virgil and Horace. It is related in the Sagas that Gudrid first advised Thorfinn to lead an expedition to Vinland in his ships. But Thorfinn and Gudrid had more enlightened and enlarged views of the enterprise than any of their precursors. Neither Leif, nor Thorvald, nor Thorstein went to Vinland with any intention of planting a permanent colony there, as is manifested by the fact that none of the adventurers carried their families with them, nor did they carry flocks, or herds, or agricultural implements, or other tokens of a settlement. But Thorfinn Karlsafne made every preparation he could for colonization and conquest. He was accompanied by one hundred and fifty-one men and seven women, and they carried with them cattle and sheep. Had his companions been composed entirely of married men and their families, this expedition would have resulted in the permanent colonization of New England. They arrived in safety at Vinland, after visiting Kialarnes, Martha's Vineyard and other places on the New England coast, all of which are described with a minuteness and accuracy most remarkable under the circumstances.

In their search for Vinland, Thorhall, a rude and superstitious pagan, raised dissension among the colonists, and left the expedition with nine men and took a different course. The Northmen never surrendered their independence or their freedom of action.

Though Thorfinn commanded the expedition, all were free. The manner in which Thorhall announced his discontent is characteristic of the race, and affords also a specimen of their literature after the style of the *improvisatore*, or Norse Skalds. Thorhall, while carrying water to his ship before departing from Thorfinn, raised the pail to his mouth to drink, and thus sang :

“ People told me when I came
Hither all would be so fine ;
The Good Vinland, known to fame,
Rich in fruits and choicest wine ;
Now the water-pail they send,
To the fountain I must bend,
Nor from out this land divine
Have I quaffed one drop of wine.”

When fresh food became scarce, and Thorhall and his companions had wandered or withdrawn, the Christians supplied themselves with food from the flesh of a whale cast on the shore ; but Thorhall, who was a pagan, taunted them with the inefficacy of their Christian prayers for food, for the flesh of the whale had made them all sick, and they were still suffering. Thorhall, claiming to be guided by his patronal deity, Thor, pretended to predict or foresee that on the shore abundance of fish and game could be procured. So obvious a course had never occurred to their bewildered minds, but it was no sooner tried than abundance of food rewarded their search. Thorhall now abandoned the expedition altogether, and, as he hoisted sail, he sang his second strophe :

“ Let your trusty band
Haste to Fatherland ;
Let our vessel brave
Plough the angry wave,
While those few who love
Vinland here may rove,
Or, with idle toil,
Fetid whales may boil,
Here on Furdstrand,
Far from Fatherland.”¹

The region or part of Vinland which was the site of Thorfinn's proposed colony was traversed by a river (now Taunton River, according to the conclusions of the learned), and locating himself on the opposite bank from Leifsbudir, he built houses for himself and his people.

The Sagas give clear and intelligent accounts of his explorations of the country, of his traffic with the natives, of the development of the colony, and of their sojourn for three years in the country.

¹ Beamish's Translation.

The most interesting event in the history of this expedition and colony was the birth of a son to Thorfinn Karlsafne and Gudrid. He was born in 1008, near the present Buzzard Point, in the State of Massachusetts, and was the first man of European blood of whose birth within the limits of our country we have any historical record. His name was Snorre Thorfinnson. He made his mark afterwards in Scandinavian annals, and his descendants were distinguished in the Church and in the State, in the republic of letters and of the sciences; and the Scandinavian sculptor, Albert Thorwaldsen, was not the least famous of this illustrious family.

As mentioned in the Sagas, this effort at early colonization on our shores lasted three years. At first the Northmen, guided by the more prudent counsels and example of Thorfinn and Gudrid, established friendly relations with the natives, which might have become lasting and have resulted in a permanent colony but for some apparently trifling accidents that led to a misunderstanding between the Northmen and the Esquimaux. Owing to such misunderstanding hostilities broke out suddenly between them, however, and the result was an abandonment of the country by the Northmen.

The attempt of Thorfinn and Gudrid to colonize Vinland is claimed to have been recorded by the Northmen in Roman and Runic characters upon a rock situated on the right bank of the Taunton River, in Bristol County, Massachusetts. This is the celebrated DIGHTON WRITING ROCK. As interpreted by many learned critics, it is said to record the name of Thorfinn and to give the number of his men; a representation of his vessel, and a picture of Gudrid and her child; and to refer to the act of taking possession of the country. While many learned men are enthusiastic in their support of this interpretation of the remarkable rock with its inscription, others ascribe it to the Indians, and others still to the action of the elements. The inscription was copied by Dr. Danforth in 1680, by Cotton Mather in 1712, by Dr. Greenwood in 1730, by Stephen Sewell in 1768, by James Winthrop in 1788, and by some of the New England Historical Societies, and by others four times in the present century. It has been visited by tourists for centuries, and is so visited still. It was shown to General Washington during his military operations in Rhode Island in the Revolutionary War, who thought it resembled the figures and pictures he had seen painted on the wraps and buffalo robes of the Indians of Virginia. Scandinavian scholars and many of the learned in this country recognize the Dighton Writing Rock as a genuine monument of the Norse colony in Vinland. The learned and enthusiastic Professor Rafn, in his great work, "*Antiquitates Americanæ*," interprets the inscription, in conformity with

the accounts of the Sagas, thus : " Thorfinn, with one hundred and fifty-one Norse seafaring men, took possession of this land." We have seen fac-similes of all the copies taken of the inscription ; while bearing some resemblance to each other they differ widely. Yet in all of them there is enough to give plausibility to the claim of the Scandinavians, and still more to interest and puzzle the curious and the learned.

The Sagas give detailed accounts of the battle which Thorfinn had with the Skrælings, and of the modes of warfare practised by the latter. One feature in the conflict was a panic created among the natives by the appearance of a frightened bull belonging to the Northmen, which escaped from his confinement and plunged through the field with loud and echoing sounds. No less a panic was created on the battlefield by the appearance in front of the fighting Northmen of a frantic woman of gigantic stature, an Amazon of the fiercest type, who rallied her countrymen to the fight and spread dismay among the Skrælings. This was Freydis, an unscrupulous woman, a natural daughter of Eric the Red and sister of Leif and Thorvald. She subsequently took a most unworthy part in the history of Vinland. The Sagas further give an account of Thorfinn's explorations of the country south and north of Vinland ; for, though he saw that he must ultimately return to Greenland and to Norway, he resolved to learn and report as much as possible concerning the country, its geography, its inhabitants, and its products. The winter following the engagement with the natives was spent in Vinland, but dissensions and social disorders, long brewing, now assumed a shape which confirmed his resolution of departing in the spring.

Thorfinn's expedition consisted of three ships when it left Greenland for Vinland. One of these was carried away from the expedition, as we have seen, by Thorhall, the hunter, to whom it must have belonged. The second was commanded by Bjarn Grimolfson. In the spring of 1010 Thorfinn and Bjarn with their respective vessels prepared to sail back to Greenland. An incident connected with Bjarn and his ship deserves to be related as illustrating the Norse character. Bjarn discovered that his vessel had been attacked by the *teredo*, a destructive worm, which had eaten the sides of his ship into honeycomb, so that she was unfit to go to sea. But he had another boat, which had been smeared with sea-oil, and this the worms did not attack. This smaller boat had capacity for carrying only half of the company. At Bjarn's suggestion the Northmen coolly resolved to cast lots to determine who should return on the vessel homeward bound, and who should accept the fate of remaining behind. Bjarn took his chance with the rest. The lots were drawn, and Bjarn was among the fortunate ones.

He and the others, who were to have the good fortune of returning home, descended from the larger ship and entered the smaller one, leaving the other half of their company on the doomed vessel, and were about to sail. Suddenly a young Icelander, who had been persuaded by Bjarn to leave his father's house in Iceland and join the expedition, and who had drawn the lot of perishing with the sinking ship, cried out from the latter, "Dost thou mean, Bjarn, to leave me here?" Bjarn answered, "So it seems; it is impossible to do otherwise; the lots are cast." The youth replied, "Very different was the promise you made to my father, when I went with thee from Iceland, than thus to leave me, for thou saidst to my father we should both share the same fate." Bjarn then honorably and heroically exchanged places with the young Icelander, whom he put upon the homeward bound boat, while he ascended again and took his place on the doomed and worm-eaten vessel. Bjarn and his unfortunate companions perished amidst a sea of waves and worms. The smaller boat returned in safety to Iceland and Norway, when the young Icelander and his companions recounted the heroic act of Bjarn Grimolfson. We rejoice in renewing and repeating this souvenir, which the Icelandic Sagas so graphically and admiringly preserve, of this heroic Viking. May his ill deeds be forgotten in this generous act. To Bjarn we address the words of Lord Byron :

"I know thee for a man of many thoughts,
And deeds of good and ill, extreme in both,
Fatal and fated in thy sufferings."

But Thorfinn and Gudrid, and Snorre, their native American son, children of prophecy and favorites of fortune, returned to Greenland and to Norway in their brave ship, which was loaded with a rich cargo of grapes from Vinland, of valuable wood called Mazur, supposed to be bird's-eye maple, furs, and other products of the country. These articles were sold in Norway at fabulous prices, and Thorfinn realized a fortune. He and his family and companions were treated with extreme honor, and he was recognized as having more than realized the prophecies. But his deeds and his fame would have been complete only on his achieving the permanent colonization of Vinland. His failure to do so left the field open to the glorious achievements of Columbus. He spent his last days in Greenland. After his death and the marriage of Snorre, Gudrid made a pilgrimage to Rome, and spent her last years in one of the many religious houses of the Eternal City. Rome was then, as she has been ever since, alive to geographical discoveries, as affording the channel for conveying the faith to heathen peoples. Rome was represented in the western hemisphere by a succession of seventeen bishops in Greenland, and one

of them, Bishop Eric Upsi, became the apostle of Vinland in the twelfth century, a fact which indicates a permanent settlement of Northmen in Rhode Island. It is quite probable that Gudrid's narratives of Thorfinn's expedition, of the birth of Snorre, and of the native races plunged in paganism, made a deep impression at Rome, and that there were not wanting learned and curious geographers to record her story. It is believed that the traditions of these expeditions of the Northmen to distant lands beyond the ocean reached the eager ears of Columbus, that he not only saw and read accounts of them at Rome, but, on the occasion of his voyage to Iceland in the spring of 1477, heard the legends of Vinland from Norse tongues, and learned them more minutely from the Monastic manuscripts preserved in the ancient convents.

The next expedition to Vinland soon followed after the return of Thorfinn. The leading spirit in this attempt was the notorious Freydis, wife of Thorvard. Her husband was the weakest of Vikings, for he was under the complete control of his unscrupulous and covetous wife. Freydis formed a partnership in a voyage to Vinland with two Icelanders, the brothers Helge and Finboge, who arrived in Greenland with three ships in the summer of 1010. Freydis broke faith with her partners at the very start, quarrelled with them immediately on her arrival in Vinland, plotted and accomplished their assassination, and when no Northman in her husband's crew was willing to kill the five women who were with the party of Helge and Finboge, she seized an axe, and with her own hands butchered them on the spot. She seized all the goods and property of her murdered victims, her late partners, and in the spring of 1011 returned to Greenland. In spite of her threats to murder any one who should divulge her crimes, the murder leaked out, and Freydis justly became the opprobrium of her race and of her sex.

Vinland is mentioned in other Sagas, and in connection with subsequent voyages. As the Greenland colonies continued to maintain themselves and to flourish for four hundred years, and as Vinland was well known to the Greenlanders, it would seem improbable, if not impossible, that so adventurous and sea-roving a people could have discontinued their intercourse with this attractive region. As Leif, Thorvald, and Thorfinn had achieved glory by their expeditions to Vinland, and as the two last had also acquired fortunes in the same adventures, the fame of Vinland must have long afterwards resounded throughout Greenland, Iceland, and Norway. The last direct expedition to Vinland, however, of which we have any record in the Sagas, is that of Bishop Upsi, in 1121, and it is related that this zealous and devoted prelate, though appointed Bishop of Gardar in Greenland, either re-

signed his episcopal office, or, having accepted it, went in search of his flock in Vinland, and devoted himself to the conversion of the natives. It is probable that missionary efforts in Vinland did not cease with Bishop Eric, for we have an account of a new land west of Iceland being discovered by two missionaries who went out from Iceland. Greenland was too well known and too thoroughly colonized to be referred to in this account. Some suppose Newfoundland was the land referred to. And in 1347 mention is made of a voyage from Greenland to Markland. At the time of this latter expedition the plague of the *Black Death* was raging in Norway, and its population was reduced from two millions to three hundred thousand. The plague continued to rage till 1351, and is supposed to have been communicated to Iceland, Greenland, and Vinland, by the ships passing between those countries and Norway. The *Black Death* is believed to have resulted in the final extinction of the Greenland and Vinland colonies. If any permanent colony was ever established in Vinland by the Northmen, as some suppose, and cite the old tower at Newport as proof of this fact, or if even occasional intercourse was maintained between Greenland and Vinland, all ended with the extermination of the Norwegian colonies in Greenland. It seems singular that the Northmen should have attached so little importance to the discovery of Vinland; but as they did not perplex their minds over the scientific theories involved, and cared not to explore the earth for the information of the inhabitants thereof, or for the benefit of science or general commerce, questions left for Columbus to study and to solve, the indifference of so rude a people seems not unnatural. It is also remarkable that none of the leading men among the Northmen, even those who had acquired fame and profit as explorers of Vinland, such as Leif, Thorvald, and Thorfinn, should have ever thought of persevering in the efforts commenced in that direction. They seem to have acted upon individual impulse or interest, and upon the acquisition of fame and fortune for themselves, they rested upon their honors and enjoyed their fortunes, though comparatively young men, for the remainder of their lives. Gudrid, the wife of Thorfinn Karlsafne, was a warm and generous advocate of Vinland colonization. She, like Isabella of Spain, was the inspiration of the enterprise, and had Thorfinn conquered and colonized Vinland Gudrid would have been the good angel of the country. D'Avezac, Kohl, Rafn, and Gravier are of opinion that Vinland continued to be known and visited by the Greenlanders, Icelanders, and Norwegians generally. Humboldt seems to sympathize in this view, and to attach some historical value to an ancient Ferroeese poem in Latin, in which Vinland is mentioned as a populous land governed by kings.

There is nothing that so arouses the cupidity of man or fires his imagination as the discovery of unknown and distant lands. From early ages the civilized portions of the world have often been electrified by such events, and the literature of such ages teems with the most extravagant accounts of what neither historian nor poet had seen. The epic poems of every people and of every age have been imaginative, creative, as well as historical. Thus the Ophir of Solomon has frequently been found and dimly located down to the age of Columbus and his discoveries, and even to the discovery of the gold regions of our own California. El Dorado was not only revived in the Spanish chronicles and poems of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but even then renowned captains and brave soldiers sought it amid the everglades of Florida and the wastes of Mississippi. Not only were these phantom regions enriched with endless treasures, but were governed by mighty kings and emperors, and embellished with every barbaric grandeur. Such extravagances of poet and chronicler have passed away, but the true historic basis of them all remains, and real modern and business-like republics have now succeeded to the Ophir and El Dorado of past centuries. And so it was with Vinland and the Icelandic and Norse poets and historians of the mother countries. And thus we find that the Sagas and Scalds of the Northmen are filled side by side with the most authentic historical records and the wanderings of poetic imaginations. The world has admired such things in Homer and in Ossian. May we not at least tolerate them in the Sagamen and Scalds of the Northmen? It is with such sentiments that we now proceed to mention the ancient Ferroeese poem, in a part of which Vinland is mentioned, with scarcely more exaggeration than the contemporaries of Columbus used in heralding and describing the countries discovered by him.

The manuscript of this interesting poem is preserved in the Royal Library at Copenhagen, the Latin text is printed in Professor Rafn's *Antiquitates Americanæ*, and Mr. Joshua Toulmin Smith gives a free but substantially correct translation of it in his *Northmen in New England*, endeavoring to preserve the style, rhythm, and verse employed in the original. The story of the poem is as follows: A certain prince of Sweden had two sons, Holdan the Strong, and Finn the Fair. The former, though the least favored by nature, was to succeed to his father's throne by the right of primogeniture, and the latter, though endowed with rich gifts of mind and person, was without a kingdom or a fortune. He became a redoubtable adventurer, and went forth to seek in marriage the most beautiful princess of the western island. Fair Ingeborg, daughter of a reigning king, was the object of his choice, and she favored his suit. Her father, the king, rejected it with disdain, on

account of the inequality of their royal standings. Finn the Fair resented the king's insults, fatal deeds ensued, and Finn was thrown into prison. The beautiful princess sends a trusty messenger to Sweden to acquaint Holdan the Strong with the sad fate of his brother in prison. Holdan was incensed; he descends from his throne and hastens to the relief of his brother, whom he releases from the dungeon-walls, and slaughters the king himself. The two brothers then repair together to the princess to urge again the suit of Finn. The princess informs them that if Finn will sail to Vinland and overcome the three kings of that noted land she will favorably consider his suit and answer make on the return of the conqueror. The brothers repair to the distant Vinland, and Finn challenges the three kings and their twelve hundred warriors to mortal combat. The challenge is accepted, and Holdan witnesses the contest. Finn slays on the first day hosts of the Vinland warriors. On the second day the remainder of the twelve hundred warriors are killed. Finn then by turns overcomes and slaughters two of the kings, and is about to kill the third king when he is himself poisoned by a dragon flying over his head. Holdan now takes up the fight, and slays the third king. He then returns to Ingeborg, the beautiful island princess, relates to her the exploits and death of Finn before overcoming the third king of Vinland, and his own victory over the surviving king; he then offers himself to her in the place of Finn the Fair. Ingeborg informs him that she can never love another than Finn. He urges his suit. The princess reserves her answer till morning and sleeps one night upon her bosom, but, overpowered with grief, she expires before sunrise. Holdan ended his days in misery.

It would be interesting to modern scholars if we had space to spread this entire poem of one hundred and four verses upon our pages in the original Latin, but we will content ourselves at present with giving in English only the verses which relate to Vinland. The contest lasted two days or more, and has been likened to the achievements related in the "Famous Ballad of Chevy Chase," where

"In one day, fifty knights were slain,
With lords of great renown."

We will now give those verses which, commencing after the narrative of Finn's release from prison, relate to Vinland, in the

ANCIENT BALLAD OF FINN THE FAIR.

"Hail Ingeborg, thou royal maid!
'Both fair and beautiful art thou;
Wilt thou this prince elect,' they said,
'And take him for thy husband now?'"

- “ Then Ingeborg doth answer make,—
‘ This matter is most hard to do ;
But, if the VINLAND KINGS you'll take,
An answer, sure, I'll give to you.’
- “ Then powerful Holdan thus replied,—
‘ T'will grief and sorrow bring to all :
For who shall reach the Vinland tide,
Then perils dire shall sure befall.’
- “ Then Finn the Fair, with rapid stride,
The palace quits, and seeks the shore !
‘ To VINLAND straight my course I'll guide,
Though Ingeborg I ne'er see more.’
- “ His silken sails he raises then,
On yards of gold extended wide ;
His sails he never furls again,
Till VINLAND from the helm he spied.
- “ Then Finn, within the garden nigh,
His costly robe he o'er him threw ;
And, so attired, with bearing high,
Straight to the palace halls he drew.
- “ And, so attired, with bearing high
Straight to the palace halls he drew :
Five hundred men were standing nigh
The VINLAND KINGS before his view.
- “ Then entered Finn the palace hall
And stood before them face to face ;
The KINGS sat on their thrones, and all,
Unmoved and silent, kept their place.
- “ It was the morning of the day,
Scarce yet Aurora's light appeared,
When there the VINLAND KINGS, they say,
Twelve hundred armed men prepared.
- “ And there the VINLAND KINGS, they say,
Twelve hundred armed men prepared ;
'Gain'st these, brave Finn the Fair, that day
To try his strength, unaided, dared.
- “ And in the midst Finn now is seen,
Active in fight before them all ;
Loud clang their arms that time, I ween ;
Now two, now three, before him fall.
- “ And in the midst Finn still is seen,
In strength he far surpasses all :
Loud clang their arms again, I ween ;
Now five, now six, before him fall.

“For two whole days the fight did last;
 From clashing swords the lightnings played;
 Nor on the earth his footsteps passed,—
 His slaughtered foes his path had made.

“And in the midst Finn still is seen,
 Nor dares, for honor's sake, to flee;
 And now, 'tis said, that there remain
 Of all that host but only three.

“And in the midst Finn still is seen;—
 Full well his deeds are known to fame;—
 And VINLAND KING the first, I ween,
 By his good sword is hewn in twain.

“And in the midst Finn still is borne,
 Nor dares, for honor's sake, to flee;
 The second VINLAND KING that morn
 His sword hath hewn in pieces three.

“Just then a dragon, o'er his head,
 His fatal venom pouring, flew;
 And Finn himself at length lay dead,
 Whom poison, and not arms, subdued.

“When Finn thus Holdan, furious, saw,
 By poison, and not arms, subdued,
 Then VINLAND KING the third, straightway
 With his good sword in twain he hewed.”

It would certainly be an interesting field of inquiry to investigate the question whether Columbus had any knowledge of the Norse discoveries in the western hemisphere, and to what extent. There are a number of circumstances strongly tending to show that Columbus knew something of these events. His long and thorough study of the subject in all its aspects must have guided his mind to this information. The absolute certainty he professed to have that he could discover land in the west could not have rested upon theory alone; it must have been based upon information of facts also. He himself states that he based his certainty on the authority of learned writers. Among the learned writers he had access to was the book of Adam of Bremen, published in 1076, “On the Propagation of the Christian Religion in the North of Europe,” to which is added a treatise “On the Position of Denmark and Other Regions Beyond Denmark.” In this work Adam of Bremen gives an account of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Greenland, and adds: “Besides these there is still another region, which has been studied by many, lying in that ocean (the Atlantic) which is called VINLAND, because vines grow there spontaneously, producing very good wine; corn likewise springs up there without being sown.” And he adds to this account of Vinland

these words: "This we know not by fabulous conjecture, but from positive statements of the Danes." His recorded conversation with the Danish king, Svend Estredsor, a nephew of Canute the Great, is the direct source of his information. The visit of Columbus to Iceland in February, 1477, brought him in more immediate contact with the traditions and written accounts in relation to the Norse discoveries in the western continent. He is believed to have conversed with the bishop and other learned men of Iceland, and as his visit there was fifteen years before he discovered America, and only one hundred and thirty years after the last Norse expedition to the lands in the Western Ocean, he must have met Icelanders whose grandfathers lived in the time of that expedition and perhaps were members of it. It is unlikely that Columbus could have been so active in his researches for geographical and nautical information as all his biographers represent, and yet have been in the midst of so much information on those subjects without coming in contact with it. Columbus never divulged to the public the extent of his knowledge of facts pointing to lands in the Western Ocean. At Rome also Columbus must have heard of the Norse expeditions to Greenland and Vinland. Gudrid, wife of Thorfinn, made a pilgrimage to Rome and spent three years there before her death. Her accounts of the wonderful voyages she had made to the unknown western lands must have been recorded in some of the religious houses she visited. It is also argued that, as Pope Paschal II., in the year 1112, appointed Eric Upsi Bishop of Garda in Greenland, and the bishop visited Vinland as part of his spiritual domain, Columbus, in search of such knowledge, must have found it where it was most accessible. There is also some ground for believing, though the fact is not established, that a map of Vinland was preserved in the Vatican, and that a copy of it was furnished to the Pinzons. Facts such as these must have formed a considerable part of the knowledge acquired by Columbus in his many years of study. When his crew mutinied on the ocean, he showed his confidence in the facts he had acquired, by promising them that if he did not discover land within three days he would abandon the voyage. The land was in sight in half the time he claimed. Would he have risked his all, a new world even, upon a promise which would have been an insane act but for the facts he possessed? Leo XIII. has now opened to historical students the treasures of the Vatican; may we not now hope to solve this interesting question? May we not hope to recover the history of the Church of Greenland and Vinland, and of the seventeen bishops and of the numerous missionaries who first carried the Cross to the West?