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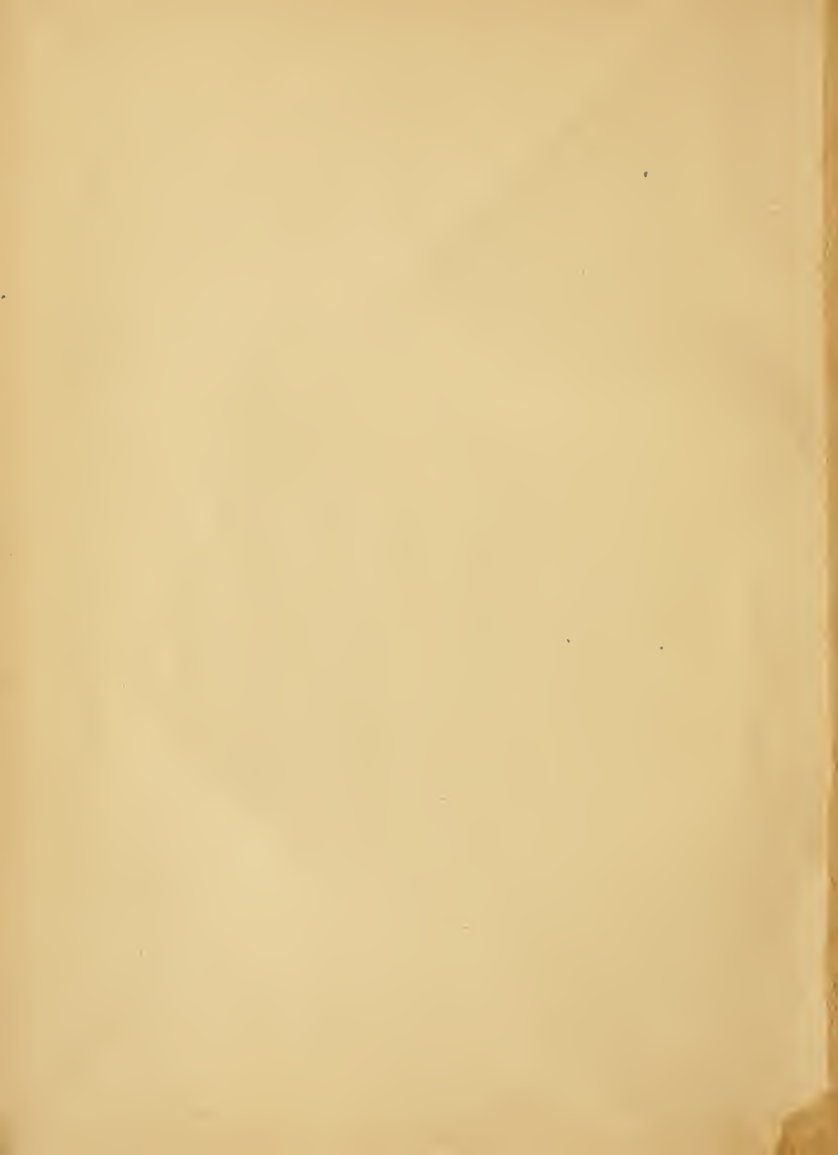
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# THE Norse Discovery of America

WITH  
Some Reference to Its True  
Significance.

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AN HISTORICAL THESIS.

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BY  
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TO  
MY ❖ WIFE

Who, tho' American-born, Is a True Norsewoman, Having  
Descended, on Mother's Side, from the Haskells,  
Who Sprang, in Many Generations, from  
the Yorkshire Hascarls and Hus-  
carls, and These again from  
the Early-day For-  
kel Huskarl of  
Norway

I Dedicate This Little Book.



## Introductory.

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The following pages contain, in substance, my Thesis for the degree of *A. M.* in Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois. A handful of copies were printed for the library of this school and, upon the solicitation of friends, a number of additional copies were prepared for general distribution. The paper lays no claims whatsoever to having exhausted this very important and interesting subject. It represents the work of a few leisure moments of a busy teacher—nothing more. It is my earnest hope, in the near future, to find the time necessary to complete a more pretentious volume on this subject, the beginnings of which have already been made.

The typographical errors that have found their way into these pages are much deplored by the author, who asks the kind indulgence of his readers.

Blair, Nebr., June, 1901.

H. W. F.





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## Some Characteristics of the Viking Age.

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"No more  
The raven from the northern shore  
Hails the bold crew to push for pelf,  
Through fire and blood and slaughtered kings  
'Neath the black terror of his wings."

—FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE.

During the early part of the eighth century,\* say the saga-men,† the hosts of Sweden and Denmark met on Braavalla Heath to fight for the supremacy of the North. This Trojan plain of Scandinavian myth lay close by the river Braa in East Gautland on the Baltic.‡ Gods and demi-gods took a hand in the struggle. Val-

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\*The exact date is uncertain; it was probably about the year 700 A. D.

†Our best references are to the HERVARAR SAGA and the SÖGUBROT.

‡The battle here fought marks the beginning of the end of the Mythic Age in the North. After this governments become better organized and many unruly spirits are forced to seek foreign climes in quest of such lawless adventures as they can no longer hope to encounter at home. With this mile-stone we may consider the Viking Age to begin. Some authorities, as for example Du Chaillu, argue that it commenced away back in the second century. Cf. Paul Chaillu THE VIKING AGE, Vol. I., page 26.

kyries\* dashed through the misty heavens, choosing their victims. Heroes fought one another and died, and were car-

The Battle of Braavalla, ca. 700 A. D. ried home to the joys of Valhal.

Odin, with his own hands, slew the aged and blind Harald Hildetand, king of Danes, and gave victory to the youthful King Sigurd Ring. Throughout the plain the dead lay heaped to the axles of the chariot wheels, and the shades of night sank upon the exhausted earth.

This, say the skalds, was the last time Odin appeared among men. From this time forth, our forefathers must needs depend on their own personal valor and good brawn for victory. For the gods returned to Valhal and their mead-feasts, and were satisfied with watching the battle from afar.† Before this time the Northmen were strangers to the history of civilized Europe. But now they commenced to pour their devastating hordes over the continent and the islands, spreading terror before them as they advanced and leaving naught save desolation and death in their wake. These were unruly times, fit only for men of blood. So terrible was the Northern scourge that the terrorized Christian nations daily prayed the

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\*These were the hand-maidens of Odin, who were sent by him to decide the battles of men. .

†This indicates that the Northmen were already beginning to disbelieve in the gods of Valhalla. It was common, from this time on, to hear of heroes who relied on nothing save their own strength and courage.

Lord to deliver them.\* But back of all their brutal impulses the invaders hid many noble qualities, which later put such an indelible stamp upon their progeny in England and America. Even their enemies, and their monkish chroniclers† who hated them so well, agreed in this, that the

Northern robbers were "faithful to their oaths and kept their promises." The Vikings. It is also worthy of notice, that wherever the Vikings settled they became the most law-abiding citizens of the land;‡ and when they chanced to return to their native home, they generally rose to the rank of influential, respected citizens. The seed of civilization was in them; but, as "religion in those days was tribal, and morality had no application outside the tribe," we should hardly expect to find this morality practiced to any extent beyond their own kinsmen.

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\*The French church litany has it: "A furore Northmannorum libera nos, o Domine!"

†"If we try to get the story of the Northmen from the French or British chroniclers it is one long dreary complaint of their barbarous customs and their heathen religion. In England the monks, shut up in their monasteries, could find nothing bad enough to say about the marauders who ravaged the shores of the country and did so much mischief. If we believe them we shall mistake the Norwegians and their companions for wild beasts and heathen savages."—Sarah Orne Jewett, *THE STORY OF THE NORMANS*, p. 9.

‡Perhaps no other one characteristic is so marked in the Scandinavian as his respect for authority. And this is not through cringing fear, as so often manifested among baser peoples, but through voluntary subordination for the common welfare.

The belief that only the brave, dying with sword in hand, would find a seat among the Einherjer,\* coupled with the crowded condition of the Northern lands, which were as yet but poorly developed economically, was the chief cause of these Viking expeditions. War with the Northmen was a profession, considered by them honorable beyond all other occupations. By degrees as the “small kings” at home became more powerful, many lesser chiefs were left in a cramped condition.

At last there remained but the choice between vassalage and the friendly sea. But as freedom was dearer to the Northmen’s heart than life itself, they spread their square sails to the storm-wind, and trusting to the kind fates of the deep, set out in quest of adventures and new fire-sides. They were never lost:

“Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam,  
Survey our empire and behold our home.”

They were as much at home in Britain as in France, in Sicily as in Miklagard.† The Viking sword was turned against all men. In turn they

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\*i. e. great champions. Fallen heroes chosen by Odin to be his guests.

†i. e. Byzantium, or Constantinople. “In Byzantium they are the leaders of the Greek emperor’s body guard, and the main support of his tottering throne. From France, led by Rollo, they tear away her fairest province and found a long line of kings. In Saxon England they are the bosom friends of such kings as Athelstane, and the sworn foe of Ethelred the Unready. In Danish England they are the foremost

were regarded a universal enemy. Under the struggle for survival, it was give and take—no favor was asked, no quarter was granted. Such men knew no fear save the fear of pale Hel; they rejoiced in the storm-wind, and laughed aloud in the face of certain death.

The Viking cruises were at first hardly more than sea-robbery, pursued for the booty to be gained. Small bands attacked and plundered isolated towns and monasteries, and then made good a hasty retreat with the ill-gotten spoil. Later on, as they became more skilled in military arts, the Vikings sailed in larger companies, led by heroes of noble birth. Commanding points on the invaded shore were seized and fortified, and from these places of vantage harrying expeditions were sent into the adjacent country. By degrees Viking life took on a nobler form. Men of high rank, often of royal blood, gathered renowned fighters under their banners, and abandoning piracy as

The Three Kinds unworthy of their attention, assumed the role of conquerors and colonizers. Peaceable merchants and traders

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among the thanes of Canute, Swein and Hardicanute, and keep down the native population with an iron heel. In Norman England the most serious opposition the conqueror meets with is from the colonists of his own race settled in Northumbria. He wastes their lands with fire and sword, and drives them across the border, where we still find their energy, their perseverance, and their speech existing in the lowland Scotch.”—G. W. Dasent, *DES ANTIQUAIRES DU NORD*.



were spared; and they sometimes even fought and exterminated their less scrupulous, plundering brethren. With such heroes wealth was deemed of smaller consequence than a name renowned for prowess in war. During this period of the Viking Age, knightly valor became very marked. A certain code of honor\* was enforced as rigidly then as later among the knightly Normans, who were direct descendents of our sea-kings.

The last period of the age was marked by extended conquest. The existence of entire nations was threatened, and in many instances whole provinces were seized and placed under the iron rule of the invaders. Now the breath of Northern vigor was infused into continental and insular political and social institutions. Invigorated blood coursed through the impoverished veins of the South, and foundations to modern nations were laid.

"It is these conquering vikings," says Boyesen,

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\*We are told that the royal youth Half forbade the use among his men of swords over two feet long. The glory of the combat lay, said he, not in the advantage of weapons, but in personal valor. His men were not allowed to capture women and children; and insults offered women were punished with death. He never reefed his dragons under the hurricane blast; but sought the most exposed and storm-beaten cape where he would anchor and laugh at the elements' important rage. Once when his ship was on the point of sinking, being filled by the angry waves, it became necessary to lighten its burden. As volunteers were called for, half the crew leaped to their watery graves, laughing and jesting as they sank!

“who have demonstrated the historic mission of the North, and doubly indemnified the world for the misery they brought upon it. The ability to endure discipline without loss of self-respect, voluntary subordination for mutual benefit, and

Contributions of the Northmen to the Political Life of Europe. the power of orderly organization, based upon these qualities, these were contributions of the Northmen to the political life of Europe.”\* A strong democratic spirit was from the earliest time fostered in the North. Resistance to tyranny and freedom of thought and speech were very marked. The accused were tried by a jury of their peers;† for personal rights were esteemed above all else. These too were contributions to the political life of Europe—contributions which eventually found their way into the English Magna Charta and the American Declaration of Independence.‡

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\*Hjalmar H. Boyesen, *THE STORY OF NORWAY*, p. 30.

†While all the Teutonic people had law-courts where the accused might appear and make public defence, it was the Scandinavians that first brought into England what was later called the jury system. With them men were from a very early day tried by a “jury of their peers.” It is lamentable, indeed, that our learned English, and more especially our learned American writers, are so lax in tracing the real origin of their own institutions and—family tree. Even such an erudite scholar as Forsyth in his *HISTORY OF JURY TRIAL*, is unable to distinguish between what in our law is Scandinavian and what is Anglo-Saxon.

‡In this connection it is interesting to note that John Morton who cast the Pennsylvania vote in favor of the Declaration of Independence, was a Delaware Swede.

The Northmen rapidly spread over a vast extent of territory. The Swedes turned their attention to the countries lying to the south and east of the Baltic. These Vaeringar, as they were called, penetrated Gardarike, the present Russia, on their way to Miklagaard, where we hear of them in the service of the Greek emperors. It fell to the lot of Rurik the Swede\* to name, and to lay the foundation of modern Russia, which took place in the year 862.

During the same age the Danes were making themselves very much at home in England, and penetrating far inland through the river-mouths of Germany and Gaul. In England they seized upon the best lands and there established themselves as masters. For many generations fully one-third of all England was governed by Danish laws, and from 1017 to 1042 Danish kings held sway over the entire realm. "The Danes," says Laing,† "must be the forefathers of as large a pro-

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\*Thomsen tells us in his entertaining way the story of three brothers, Rurik, Sineus, and Truvor, who were invited from Sweden, and settled at Novgorod in 862. Says he, "according to some accounts these brothers were summoned by Gostomisl, a prominent Novgorodian; but the invitation of Rurik, Sineus, and Truvor is only a Russian explanation of a Swedish invasion. The names are Scandinavian. Rurik is the Old-Norse for Hraekr; Sineus stands for Signiutr, and Truvor for Thorvardr."—Cf. Thomson, THE RELATIONS BETWEEN ANCIENT RUSSIA AND SCANDINAVIA.

†Samuel Laing, Preface to his translation of the HEIMSKRINGLA.



portion of the present English nation as the Saxons themselves."\* While their brothers were in this manner occupied in the East and South, the Norwegians were not idle. With an inborn love

Extent of the Viking Conquests.	for adventure they struck boldly out into the unknown western seas, and pushed their way to every island and shore in the North Atlantic. They groped their way to the Orkneys, to the Shetlands and the Faröes; they settled the coasts of Scotland and founded kingdoms in Ireland. Later they discovered Iceland and Greenland, and in the year 986 stumbled upon the mainland of America. Under Rolf GANGER† they seized and
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\*Du Chaillu inclines to the opinion that the early Saxon tribes in England were in reality tribes of Sucones (Swedes), Danes and Norwegians; and that the Romans through ignorance mistook them for Saxons. His argument is based chiefly on the fact that the Scandinavians were from a very early day sea-farers. They scoured the North Sea and English Channel with their mighty fleets long before Charlemagne's time. And during his reign the Saxons and Franks were absolutely without naval protection. The Saxons had not a single vessel to retire to, or by help of which to hinder the Frankish conqueror from crossing their streams. "Though hardly more than three hundred years had elapsed since the time when, according to the Roman writers, the fleets of the Franks and Saxons swarmed over every sea of Europe, not a vestige of their former maritime power remained in the time of Charlemagne, and the Saxons were still occupying the same country as in the days of Ptolomy."—Paul Du Chaillu, *THE VIKING AGE*, Vol. I. p. 22.

†It should be distinctly understood that Rolf was a Norwegian, though many of his followers were Danes and Swedes. He, like so many others, fell under the displeasure of Harold HAARFAGER, and was forced to flee from Nor.

settled fertile Normandy, which soon took its place as one of the formidable powers of Europe. These Normans, as they were called in France, set up a Norman nation in Italy, and in the year 1060, crossed the Channel and conquered all England.

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way. In the Hebrides he was joined by many of his countrymen, and together they rounded the coast of Scotland and steered for Holland. From these already thoroughly devastated coasts, the expedition continued through the Channel, and soon we see them sailing up the Seine and sounding their challenge under the very walls of Paris. After Rolf had taken Rouen, Bayeux and some other places, the helpless French king, Charles the Simple, made the following offer which was accepted: "King Charles offers you his daughter in marriage, with the hereditary lordship of all the country situated between the river Epte and Brittany, if you consent to become a Christian, and to live in peace with his kingdom."—*Mandans, si christianus efficere-tur, terram maritimam ab Epte flumine usque ad britan-nicos limites, cum sua filia nomine Gisla, se ei daturum fore.*—*Willelmi Gemeticensis, HIST. NORMANN., APUD SCRIPT. RER. NORMANN., p. 231.*

## The Exodus to Iceland.

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"Hail, Isle! with mist and snowstorms girt around,  
Where fire and earthquake rend the shattered ground,—  
Here once o'er furthest ocean's icy path  
The Northmen fled a tyrant monarch's wrath:  
Here, cheered by song and story, dwelt they free,  
And held unscathed their laws and liberty."

—VIGA GLUM'S SAGA.

The early Norwegians, or Norsemen, were a remarkable race! They were restive, often violent, daring in the extreme, and above all else, independent. They were like the elements that struggled about them, like their hardy motherland. An immense ridge of rocks heaped up by the early Jötuns,\* pierced to its very heart by innumerable arms of the ocean. Lying high up under the polar star it has a wonderful, changeable nature. "The ocean roars along its rock-bound coast, and during the long, dark winter the storms howl and rage, and hurl the waves in white showers of

Norway. spray against the sky. Great swarms of sea-birds drift like snow over the waters and circle screaming around the lonely cliffs. The aurora borealis flashes like a huge shining fan

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\*The gods of Jötunheim, between whom and the Valhal gods the bitterest enmity existed. A parallel to the Titans and Olympian gods of Greek mythology.

over the northern heavens, and the stars glitter with a keen, frosty splendor. But in summer all this is changed as by a miracle. Then the sun shines warmly, even within the polar circle; innumerable wild flowers sprout forth, the swelling rivers dance singing to the sea, and the birches mingle their light-green foliage with the darker green of the pine,.....the ocean spreads like a great burnished mirror under the cloudless sky, the fishes leap, and the gulls and eider ducks rock tranquilly upon the shiny waters.”\*

On account of the physical characteristics of the soil, Norway was early divided into a number of small, independent districts, each ruled by its independent “small king,” or jarl. Halftan SVARTE of the renowned YNGLINGE family ruled Vestfold and other small districts on the modern Christiania Fjord. Upon his death, in the year 863, he was succeeded by his ten-year-old son Harold. But, ill-content with his heritage, this youthful ruler took a solemn oath never to cut his hair nor to comb his long, flaxen locks before he had gathered all Norway under his scepter. Ten years of war was required to complete the task. And King Harold, released from his oath, had leisure enough to tonsure his hair and beard—henceforth he was surnamed HAARFAGER, i. e. Fairhair.

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\*Hjalmar H. Boyesen, THE STORY OF NORWAY, p. 4.

The great sea fight at Hafsfjord made Harold master of Norway. Here a number of chiefs had assembled with all their retainers and armaments,\* vainly hoping by one united effort to crush the usurper of their ancient liberties. But Harold prevailed and "small king" rule was forever dead in Norway. The harshness of the new laws that were now imposed, together with heavy taxation, and Harold's confiscation of all ODEL, or public domain, were more than many of the

The Exodus of 872. proud old chieftains cared to endure; so choosing freedom without a home-land in preference to thralldom under an upstart king, they embarked with their families and followers, and after solemn sacrifice to the gods, set sail to the westward. Many of the noblest and most renowned clans of the land thus went into voluntary exile,—here begins the great exodus of the year 872.

The earliest inhabitants of Iceland appear to

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\*Thjodolf, one of King Harold's skalds, who was present describes the advent of the enemy in the following song:

"Ladte var de med Haulder  
og hvide Skjolde,  
med vesterlandske Spyd  
og med valske Sværd.  
Berserker brølede,  
Kamp de haabede,  
Ulfhedner hylede,  
og Jernene gjaldede."

have been Irish monks and anchorites,\* who may have taken up their abode in the island soon after 725. The first Scandinavians to visit Iceland were the Swede Gardar and the Norwegian Naddodd, or Nadod. The former, whose father at this time resided in Denmark, attempted a voyage to Scotland, round about the year of 860. In the dangerous Pentland Firth his ship was caught by a hurricane and carried far to the northward. However, he made land on the east coast of Iceland where he found a safe haven. Gardar, who soon afterwards visited Norway, is said to have been very laud in his praise of the island, which from him was called Gardarsholm. Nadod, Gardar's contemporary and rival for first honors, was also carried to Iceland by a gale. With his men he made an inland voyage, and scaled a lofty mountain wherefrom barren, uninhabited stretches of waste could be seen. This snowland, as he called it, had no charms for a Viking of Nadod's caliber, and he too returned home soon.

The navigator who next discovered the island, and who first called it by its present name, was the bold Floki Vilgerdson. He sailed from Raga-land in Norway and steered without hesitation into the unknown sea, depending for guidance on

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\* Authorities from various sources agree in this, that Irish religious orders dwelled in the Island when the Norsemen arrived. These PAPAS, as the new-comers called them, left Iceland immediately upon the coming of the Scandinavians



his consecrated ravens.\* These were turned loose the one after the other; and the last one finding its bearings, led him to the land of his seeking.

Floki spent two winters on the island, exploring and fishing.

The Settlement  
of Iceland,  
874.

But ill content with the country, he abandoned his contemplated colonization and set sail for Norway. Other participants in this expedition, on the contrary, were well pleased with Iceland, and declared the soil so rich that butter oozed from every straw in the land.†

In this way the North became acquainted with the great Thule; though no efforts were made to settle it before after the battle of Hafrsfjord. The foster-brothers Ingolf and Hjörleif were forced to flee from Norway about this time, as a result of blood-feud and subsequent murder. They embarked at Fjordefylke with their families and thralls, and as many of their personal effects as could be conveniently moved,‡ and reached the eastern coast

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\*The compass and astrolabe were of course unknown to the Northmen of the Viking Age. They depended for guidance solely upon the sun and the stars, and in cloudy weather, upon the flight of birds, usually ravens.

†An excellent description of Iceland's physical appearance, accessible to readers of the Scandinavian languages, is found in N. M. Petersen's HISTORIE FORTÆLLINGER OM ISLÆNDERNES FLERD HJEMME OG UDE. Copenhagen, 1852.

‡The immigrants brought with them to Iceland not only personal effects but even such real estate as temples, etc., carried in sections. So thorough was this removal that the settlements are often spoken of as "det udflyttede Norge."

of Iceland late in the year 874. Within sight of land the ships carrying the foster-brothers became separated. Hjörleif was carried to the westward and landed at a headland which he called, after himself Hjörleifshöfde. Here he was murdered the following spring by his Irish thralls. Ingolf was more fortunate than Hjörleif; it fell to his lot to become Iceland's real founder. On approaching the shore, he threw overboard his consecrated high-seat posts,\* vowing to set up his abode wherever the gods might choose to cast them ashore. After spending the first winter at the socalled Ingolfshöfde, he began the search for his posts. While thus engaged he came upon the bodies of his murdered kinsmen. As soon as he had buried the dead, one of the most sacred duties of the ancients, he hunted down the assassins and slew them all without mercy. The high-seat posts meanwhile drifted ashore at Rejkjanes, where the

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\*Called ANDVEGES-SULER, or SET-STOKKER. They were the two carved wooden posts placed before the high-seat in the banquet hall and were symbolic of the chieftain's rank.—

“Through the whole length of the hall shone forth the table  
of oak wood,  
Brighter than steel, and polished; the pillars twain of the  
high seats  
Stood on each side thereof; two gods deep carved out of  
elm wood:  
Odin with glance of a king, and Frey with the sun on his  
forehead.” —FRITHIOF'S SAGA, Ch. III., p. 18.



owner found them after a search of three years.

Rejkjavik      In fulfilment of his vow Ingolf  
Founded, 877.      settled a place which he named  
Rejkjavik, now Iceland's thriftiest hamlet.

The fame of the island's richness and great size soon drew other malcontents from Norway, and between the years 874 and 934, the famous *Land-namstid*,\* all the habitable districts were peopled. Whole clans arrived, carrying with them the old Norse usages, traditions and laws. These emigrants were among Norway's proudest sons, high born chiefs, many of them descended from kings and earls, bringing with them great wealth and culture. His own dwelling completed, a chief's first duty was to erect a temple, or Hov, to his household gods. It was common enough to hear of HOV-MEN who brought along from Norway portions of the temple wood-work, together with hallowed earth scraped from the spot where the altar had stood. Near the temple it was customary to locate the THING,† or general assise. For many years the most renowned of these assises was the KJALARNES-THING. Thither throng-

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\*At the close of these sixty years, the island's population was larger than it has been at any period since that time.

†The THING was both legislative and judicial. All freeholders had a voice in the deliberations. In Iceland THING was held twice a year—a four days' session in the spring of the year, and a short autumn session. The ALTHING, or general THING, convened during the summer and lasted, generally, fourteen days.

ed the colonists to have their differences adjusted, and to sit as jurors or to act as witnesses. But its fame vaned for one reason and another, and the Icelanders began to clamor for some authorized common court. To mend this want, the aged wise-man Ulfljot undertook a voyage to Norway, where he remained three years, studying the laws

Icelandic Law Courts.	of that country under the guidance of Thorleif the WISE. The code—the Ulfljot law—was read to the assembled people at the ALTHING,* located henceforth at Thingvalla,† in the year 928. Within the first half century succeeding the creation of the ALTHING, Iceland became organized under a uniform civil government. The whole island was divided into QUARTERS, these QUARTERS again into THINGS and each THING in turn embraced three or more GODORDS, or temple districts, constituting a sort of lower court, while thirty-six judges elected in each QUARTER constituted its district court. The FIFTH-COURT, an organization resembling our
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\*“The ALTHING was placed where it is now, according to the advise of Ulfljot and all the men of the land. Before this the Thing was at Kjalarnes, established by Thorstein, son of Ingolf, the (first) settler, and father of Thorkel Mani (moon), lawman, and other chiefs.”—*Islandingabók*.

†Thingvalle, or Thingvalla (Thing-plain) is situated on the ÖXAR-AA (Ox river) in southwestern Iceland, not far from Reykjavik.

modern supreme court, sat as a tribunal of last appeal.\*

As the Icelanders had left their Norwegian fire-sides in search of political freedom, the government they established was from the first very democratic. It could hardly be said to be a republic in our modern sense of the word, but rather a patriarchal aristocracy. For the power was centered in a few families, each retaining its patriarchal organization unaffected by higher government. Nor was the state at any time very peaceful. Bloody feuds and wars were continually carried

The Government on by the haughty, restless of Iceland. chiefs, who individually strove to set up tyrannies as absolute as any that Norwegian kings had ever attempted. Even after the introduction of Christianity in the year 1000 cruel feuds were common. As late as 1262, the year in which the island declared fealty to Norway, we hear of entire families perishing in their homes fired by some remorseless enemy.†

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\*It is very interesting to note the similitude of these early Icelandic courts and our modern English and American courts. Take for instance an American state district court; in all its essentials—the jury, the judge, the bar—it reminds one of the ancient QUARTER-COURT. Again, while our modern law-system is greatly indebted to Justinian for his code, let us not underestimate the Common Law; and then bear in mind, that the most important principles laid down in this are of Northern origin.

†See *Burnt Njal's Saga*, which is accessible through several good English translations; or read P. M. Petersen's *NJALS SAGA*, Köbenhavn, 1862.

Our forefathers' religion did not appeal to the nobler instincts of man exactly, rather, I should say, to his baser. So it was not till the teachings of the White Christ prevailed in the North, and the old worshippers of Odin began to live by Christian precept, that ancient laws and customs lost much of their harshness. The advent of Christianity put a summary end to Viking cruises, and with them passed many an opportunity for heroic deeds. But the memory of ancestral achievements were not to perish. They were cherished by the people who gloried in their ancestors' greatness. Unerring skalds\* and saga-men† handed down the events from age to age, in one unbroken chain, till

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\*The skalds, or singing poets, were held in the highest esteem in the North. Their muse was reckoned the gift of God, which all, even great chiefs and kings, were eager to attain. A renowned skald was as dear to the people, high and low, as the greatest hero of the land. He feasted at the royal table; sang the king's deeds at the banquet; fought by his side in battle; and chanted his praises when death had closed his eyes. It is remarkable to what a degree of perfection they had developed their memories, for they were as apt at extemporaneous verse as at repeating old songs. Like the Homeric rhapsodists of old, they could repeat, word for word, scores of songs. Of the blind skald Stuf, it was said that he could rehearse between two and three hundred songs without pausing. To show how very common it was in those days to cultivate the memory, we may repeat what Halmund (in the *Grettir Saga*) says to his young daughter: "Thou shalt now listen whilst I relate my deeds, and sing thereof a song, which thou shalt afterwards cut upon a staff."

†Persons who recited from memory the sagas, or narrative writings. Their office was to preserve the family and general history of the Northmen. (See below, *THE RELIABILITY OF ICELANDIC LITERATURE*).

they were at length committed to writing about the year 1000. In the twelfth century, while the continent of Europe was shrouded in intellectual darkness, save for the feeble rays of light emanating from monasteries scattered here and there, diligent scholars were hard at work in Iceland, laying up such stores of prose and verse as have been the marvel of the whole world.

The Icelanders were especially fond of history and of working out geneologies. In trustworthiness and accuracy these works were far in advance of their age; some of them could, as far as details are concerned, be used as models even in our day of mechanical perfection in book making. One of the most voluminous and erudite of these scholars was the priest Ari Thorgilsson HINN FRODHI.\* Born in 1067, he lay the foundation

Iceland, a Literary Center. to history writing on the island. He was the chief author of the celebrated LANDNAMA-BÖK, or geneological table of the early Icelandic settlers, a book which we shall have occasion to refer to later in our discussion. Some of his other important works were the ISLANDINGA-BÖK, which contained the history of Iceland from its discovery down to Ari's own day, and the KONUNGA-BÖK, or chronicle of the kings of Norway. Another writer of special interest to us in our present relation was Snorri

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\*HINN FRODHI, i. e. the wise.



Sturlason, who counted such famous men as Egil Skallagrimsson\* and Thorfinn Karlsefni among his ancestors. He was born in 1178 and like Ari FRODHI, at an early age became both chief and priest. His fame as a skald and historian extended far beyond the limits of Iceland. To Snorri are we indebted for the great HEIMSKRINGLA, or history of the kings of Norway, and very likely also for the YOUNGER or PROSE EDDA, which is a skaldic manual of Norse mythology. Such historical chronicles as mentioned above, and many others yet to be named, are our chief sources from which we draw the story of the Norse discovery of America.

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\*Egil Skallagrimsson, a great Icelandic chief and the hero of one of the greatest of the Iceland Sagas.—See N. M. Petersen, HISTORISKE FORTÆLLINGER OM ISLÆNDERNES FÆRD.

## The Reliability of Icelandic Literature.

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"The Icelandic poems have no parallel in all the treasures of ancient literature; they are the expressions of the souls of poets existing in the primeval and uneffeminated earth."

—THE HOWITTS.

A striking trait of the Scandinavians and the Icelanders of the early period, and a trait which is just as marked in their present day decendents up under the polar circle, was their unsatiable craving for news-happenings from the outer world. The Northern kingdoms were, as stated above, cut up into innumerable districts by mountain and sea, forming practically separate states, each occupied, as it were, by one large family. What happened within this family group was cherished as common history and preserved in song and story, and told from generation to generation by the saga men. When a stranger arrived from a neighboring fjord or island, or from foreign lands, he was carried in triumph to a chieftain's hall and benched opposite the high seat. Having partaken of the best the house provided, it was meet that he in

turn tell all that had happened where he came from, and the news he had heard in his travels.

How the Deeds of extraordinary merit  
Sagas Originated. were repeated from place to place—at the THING, and at the games and the baths. In this way such events became part of both local and national history. Nor was their interest confined to home history. Foreign news was listened to as eagerly as any, and incorporated with the rest into one great historic fabric. Let it be understood then, that these narratives were no mere fables and yarns spun to entertain the masses; but truthful recitals by men who had heard and seen, and in many instances been participants in what they told!\* To be sure, the narratives were not always entirely reliable. Some would naturally enough be distorted for one reason or another. Oftime false conceptions of the truth or even personal prejudice found their way into recitals that otherwise were entirely sound in their ground-work. But what *written* history, even in our day and time, is entirely free from personal bias and misconception!†

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\*It must be remarked here that this statement refers only to the so-called HISTORICAL SAGAS for a discussion of which see below.

†As De Costa says, "The relation of prodigies in no wise destroys the credibility of historical statement. If this were not so, we should be obliged to discard the greater portion of well known history, and even suspect plain matters of fact in the writings of such men as Dr. Johnson because that great scholar fully believed in the reality of an appari-



The oral narratives were in course of time reduced to writing. With the advent of Christianity the Roman alphabet was substantially substituted for the inconvenient and incomplete system of *runes*,\* which had hitherto been the only means of writing known in the North. The use of letters extended so rapidly that the saga-men, like the runes, were speedily relegated to the past. Throughout the whole of Iceland, industrious scribes set to work to gather up and reduce to writing the literature of ages. In 1116 the whole

<p>The Sagas Committed to Writing, between 1000 and 1200 A. D.</p>	<p>law code was committed to writing; and in 1112 the major part of the Church law was written. About the same time history writing commenced, and by the opening of the Thirteenth century many of the sagas were already written. The Augustan Age of Icelandic literature had commenced. Both in quantity and quality did the island's productions excel those of any other European nation at that time. In fact, as De Costa states, "the sagas formed the first prose</p>
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tion known in London as the Cock-Lane Ghost. "—THE PRE-COLUMBIAN DISCOVERY OF AMERICA BY THE NORTHMEN.

\*Derived from RYN, signifying a furrow. It should be noted that while the Roman alphabet did supplant the runes, some of the letters were retained because the Icelanders had certain sounds unknown to the Romans. A glance at an Icelandic book will verify this.

literature in any modern language spoken by the people."\*

If some of the historians who have declared the sagas *incredible* and *mythological* were half as familiar with these as they are with the history of Greece and Rome, their denunciation would never have been penned. Such statements display an *utter ignorance of the real nature of the sagas*. No person giving the subject conscientious thought could possibly bring in such a verdict. And if Bancroft and other American historians are *doubters*, it is plainly because they are very unfamiliar with the subject, or because it suits their purpose to ignore all Northern claims to discovery. It is with unmixed pleasure, therefore, that we turn to such a broad-minded, modern scholar as John Fiske to hear a really logical interpretation of the difficulty. He strikes the keynote when he states that the "misapprehension is due to the associations with which the word 'sagas' has been clothed." For, as he says, "we

John Fiske's  
Defense of the  
Word "Sagas." are in the habit of using the word  
in English as equivalent to  
legendary or semi-mythical nar-  
ratives. And to cite a 'saga' as authority for a  
statement, seems therefore to some people as inad-

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\*In this connection, Sir Edmund Head says, "No doubt there were translations in Anglo-Saxon from the Latin, by Alfred, of an early date, but there was in truth no vernacular literature. I cannot name," he continues, "any work in

missible as to cite a fairy-tale." From this he goes on to refute in part and particle the grotesquely ridiculous comparison made between Leif Eriksson and Agamemnon by a committee of the Massachusetts Historical Society. And after a careful comparison he concludes that "the Trojan War and its heroes, as we have it in Homer and the Athenian dramatists, is pure folk-lore as regards form, and chiefly folk-lore as regards contents;" but, "it would be hard to find anything more unlike such writings than the class of Icelandic sagas to which that of Erik the Red belongs. Here we have quiet sober narrative, not in the least like a fairy-tale, but often much more like a ship's log, whatsoever such narrative may be, it is not folk-lore." Much of the misapprehension apparently rests upon the fact that the Icelanders did not classify their various narrative-writings under separate heads, as "history" and "story;" but merely used the term "sagas" in common for all. This fact understood, it only remains to classify the sagas. And this Fiske accomplishes most admirably by dividing them into *mythical sagas* and *historical sagas*.\*

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high or low German prose which can be carried back to this period. In France, prose writing cannot be said to have begun before the time of Villehardouin (1204), and Joinville (1202). Caetilian prose certainly did not commence before the time of Alfonso X (1252)."

\*For a complete discussion of the word "sagas" as misinterpreted by scholars and others in this country, see John Fiske, *THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA*. Vol. I, pp. 194-198.

In the first class are of course placed such mythical narratives as the Eddas and the like, together with the folk-love elements. The second class includes that large mass of purely historical narratives which comprise the sagas of Egil and Njal, the Eyrbyggja, the Laxdaela, the Storlunga, with a host of others, besides biographies and chronological writings galore. As we pass from this part of the subject, then, let us keep in mind the distinction between the two kinds of sagas. With this, we may dwell for a brief time upon those particular historical sagas which are our chief sources on the question of the Norsemen in America, and make note why they are perfectly *reliable*.

In the famous Anni Magnussen collection of manuscripts in the University Library at Copenhagen are to be found two celebrated skin-books, brought thither from their repositories in Iceland. They are the *CODEx FLATÖENSIS* or *FLATEYAR-BÖK*, found at Flatö, and the *HAUKS-BÖK*, often spoken of as the western version. Of these invaluable manuscripts, the *Flateyar-bök* was completed sometime between the years 1388 and 1395 by the erudite priest Jon Thordharsson. The work is really a history of the Norwegian king Olaf Trygvasson, in the course of writing which the thorough-going Jon saw an opportunity to dilate upon the career of Leif Eriksson, who as an intimate friend of King Olaf could not be passed without notice, and thus he came to tell the story of Greenland

and Vinland the Good. This chapter of the FLA-Erik the Red's TEYAR-BÖK is generally spoken of as Erik the Red's Saga. There can be no doubt that the historian made use of the original of the saga in his compilation. The original manuscript is now unfortunately lost, but it would appear from internal evidence, based on language and style, that it was the production of the twelfth century.

The HAUKS-BÖK, which is the older and, upon the whole, the more complete of the two versions, is the work of Governor Hauk Erlendsson, who died in Iceland in 1334. Hauk was one of the greatest scholars that the island has produced; and what was more, he could boast lineal descent from Snorri Thorfinnsson, the first white child born on the American mainland. A great lover of books, he spent many years of his life copying manuscripts and reducing oral traditions to writing. The major part of his work is found in the several hundred skins of the artistically finished HAUKS-BÖK which contains among others the Thorfinn story of Thorfinn Karlsefni's Karlsefni's Saga. colonization of Vinland. This narrative is generally known under the name of Thorfinn Karlsefni's Saga.

Mr. Slafter appears to be unable to decide in his mind whether Hauk copied the Saga from an older manuscript or whether he reduced it to writing



from oral tradition.\* Fiske is very positive, on the other hand, that it would be utterly impossible to have preserved the Saga in its integrity for such a long time, had it been handed down in oral tradition. For, as he argues, 'the many marks of truthfulness in detail foreign to ordinary Icelandic experience would have been lost, and some extravagant statements necessarily interpolated.'† This certainly is the only national view to be taken. And it allows of but one conclusion—that the *HAUKS-BÖK*, as well as the *FLATEYAR-BÖK*, was copied from some older manuscript no longer known to exist. The very fact that there survive two written versions, displaying a substantial agreement, though differing considerably in detail, is in itself rather strong proof of the existence of earlier manuscripts. A careful study of their divergencies furthermore shows that the *CODEx FLATÖENSIS*

The Historical  
Agreement  
of the  
Two Versions.

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\*He says, "Whether it had been committed to writing at an earlier period, and copied by him from a manuscript, or whether he took the narrative from oral tradition and reduced it himself to writing for the first time, is not known." —*VOYAGES OF THE NORWICHMEN TO AMERICA*, E. F. Slafter, Editor. Now, is the author's indecision of mind not traceable to certain statements of the saga itself? As, "Karlsefni has accurately related to all men the occurrences on all these voyages, of which somewhat is now related here." Any rational being will, however, see at a glance that this statement need not decide the case—it may be made to read two ways.

†John Fiske, *DISCOVERY OF AMERICA*, Vol. I. p. 201.

could impossibly have been copied from the older HAUKS-BOK; and should prove to the satisfaction of even the rankest doubter, the utter impossibility of the two writers "having banded together for the purpose of historical fraud."\*

Although the originals of the two great narratives can no longer be produced, their truthfulness is attested to by incidental references to the heroes and actors of these very sagas, throughout the entire mass of Icelandic literature, and in some

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\*Some writers are slow to accept the truth of the Sagas because, as we have stated heretofore, instances of the marvelous and super-natural do occur occasionally—such people are to be pitied. But what is stranger, it occurs that writers refuse to accept them because they show too many substantial agreements! Because the sagas are too true, too accurate; because they have been finished in such a painstaking manner—these writers shout, "put up job!"—such people are not to be pardoned. From such authorities as these one may even expect to hear, "that the manuscripts describing the Vinland voyages like as not belong to the post-Columbian age!" With statements of this sort we should have no patience. Let these over-zealous and, withal, ignorant worshippers of the Genoese navigator get to work and study the narratives; this task ended, we challenge them to produce any evidence whatever to substantiate their claim. What with the innumerable "thumb-marks" of truth—the straight forward way of telling the story, sparing neither friend nor foe, the entire absence of any anxiety to prove the connection of the Northmen with the new continent or of any wish to prove priority of discovery—these narratives must be accepted to be as trustworthy, as entirely independent of each other, as two such works as Irving's *LIFE OF COLUMBUS* and Winsor's *CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS*.

The writers alluded to above are happily few, and becoming fewer every day. The rank and file of the world's historians in our day accept the Sagas as entirely reliable,



writers who were not Icelandic.\* And, to again quote Fiske, "such incidental references imply the existence, during the interval between the Vinland voyages and Hauk's manuscript, of many inter-

Incidental Refer- ences to Vinland from Other Sources.	mediate links of sound testimony that have since dropped out of sight; and therefore they go far toward removing whatever
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presumption may be alleged against Hauk's manuscript because of its distance from the events."† All these "intermediate links," as they appear in the whole body of Icelandic history, furnish indisputable evidence that no literary fraud could have been committed.

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accept also the discovery of America by Leif Eriksson in year 1000, though many DO maintain that THE DISCOVERY HAD NO REAL SIGNIFICENCE.

\*For a discussion of these references see below.

†John Fiske, THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA, Vol. I., p. 203.

## The Story of the Discovery.

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"Far had I wandered from this northern shore,  
Far from the bare heights and the wintry seas,  
Dreaming of these  
No more."

—A. F.

The earliest narrative\* we have of the Icelanders on the American continent is, that one Ari Maarsson of Rejkjanes was, in the year 728, carried by storms westward across the sea to a strange land which was named Hvitramannaland,† or Great Ireland. The story of this half-mythical country some five or six years later Hvitramannaland induced the hot-headed Erik Discovered, 928. Thorvaldsson the Red, who had been outlawed in Norway on account of a murder of which he had been found guilty, to start

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\*This is taken from the LANDNAMA-BÖK and is without the least shadow of doubt authentic history. The only point in doubt is the location of Ari's discovery.

†Hvitramannaland (the white men's land) according to the narrative lay "six days' sail west of Ireland." The question now rises, could this in any probability have been the American mainland? A six days' voyage, even with high winds, could hardly have carried the fleetest dragon more than half way across the space intervening between Ireland and the American coast. Hvitramannaland is more likely to have been an island or group of islands lying to the west or southwest of Ireland—say the Azores. Professor Rafn persists in believing that the Roman numeral VI. in the very indistinct manuscript is intended for XX. or XI. (a

on a search for those shores. He voyaged no farther, however, than to Öxney, or Ox-island, at the mouth of Breidafjord in Iceland, and there took up his abode. Here again he straightway became entangled in a blood-feud, and ended it all by slaying his neighbor, the powerful Eyolf Saur. Erik was now a second time outlawed, and found it expedient to seek some more remote asylum. One of his kinsmen, Gunnbjörn, had meanwhile in the year 876 chanced upon some outlying islands\* on Greenland's east coast, and thither Erik now decided to flee.

With a handful of comrades he set sail in the

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dangerous hypothesis) and that the land in question should be sought in Florida or Georgia. To strengthen his view he cites an old Shawanese tradition which has it, that these Indians' ancestors came from over the sea. Dr. Enander, too, in his *NORDMÄNNEN I AMERIKA*, rests his case entirely too much on such Indian deductions. While the Indians very likely did receive a slight infusion of Norse blood, it is dangerous in the extreme to find old Norse words in the Dakotah dialects, to see marked likenesses between Scandinavian and Iroquois law-systems, and to quote such sweeping statements, as: "Det var Nordmannablod, som flöt i mer än en indianstams ådror, Det var Nordmannakarakter, som afspeglade sig i många af deras handlingar, seder och bruk i krig och i fred." It is just as risky to assert that the Aztecs of Mexico learned their "Old Testament truths," as they have been called by the Spaniards, from the Northmen; for let us bear in mind, there live people in the South Sea Islands now who have traditions of a Noaic Flood and of a sort of a Tower of Babel. It is my opinion that lovers of the discovery question do their cause inestimable harm by venturing on such insecure ground. We have no need of so many theories and hypotheses—the case is won without them, and only bemuddled with them.

\*These were called Gunnbjörn's Skerries, and for years,

year 983 and soon sighted land at the promontory which later was called Herjulsnes. Following thence the broken shoreline southwardly he arrived at the so-called Eriksfjord and wintered there. Three years were now spent in exploring the numerous inlets of the southern coast. The vast stretch east of Cape Farewell was found to be worthless for settlement, with its ice-locked harbors and its seemingly endless waste of ice and snow. Thenceforth the explorers expended their energies in examining the deep fjords farther to the west. At length, in the year 986, a suitable place was found at the head of Igaliko Fjord, not far from the present Julianeshaab.

The land settled, though girth about with ice and snow, seems upon the whole to have pleased these hardy home-seekers, who found there an abundance of meadows and hay-lands.\* Erik called it Greenland, "for," quoth he, 986. "people will be attracted hither if the land has a good name." Nor was he wrong

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down to 1456, they were familiar mile-stones to Greenland-farers; but in that year they were destroyed by a volcanic eruption and to this day form dangerous shoals, shunned by navigators of those waters. On Ruysch's map of the world we read: "INSULA HAEC ANNO DONIMI 1456 FUIT TOTALITER COMBUSTA."

\*The indications are, that some slight change has taken place in the climate of Greenland during the past 900 years—not so great a change, however, that Erik the Red could have called it "a green land" on account of its verdure. The various descriptions have it that in those days it had meadows and hay-lands; but as for that, these may be seen even

in his mode of reasoning; for, venturing back to Iceland, he found it easy to induce a great number of Icelanders to sell their homesteads and try their fortunes in the highly praised Greenland. A fleet numbering twenty-five ships left the island during the same year. But so rough was the weather and so dangerous the coast that only fourteen ships, all told, made harbor in safety. These early comers settled, for the most part, the district in the immediate neighborhood of Brattalid, and there founded what they called ÖST BYGD, or East Settlement. In the course of a short time additional colonists flocked over from Iceland, and a second settlement called VEST BYGD, or West Settlement, sprang up in the vicinity of the present-day Godthaab. Thus, in a few years,

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today. Now Erik, as we have learned, sought an attractive name for the land purposely to draw colonists. It certainly does appear from the testimony of Ivar Baardsen (GRÖNLANDIAE DESCRIPTIO), who lived during the last half of the 14th century, that there was already in his day a southward drift of the ice-sheet along the eastern coast of Greenland, so much so that ships sailing from Iceland were beginning to follow a more southern route. That this polar ice-sheet is still continuing its downward flow is testified to by modern scientists. See Zahrtmann, JOURNAL OF ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, Vol. V. p. 102. Such an accumulation of ice, we may readily believe, has had sufficient influence on the climate to shorten the hay crops and make the growing of cereal grains impossible. Thormodus Torfaeus, the author of HISTORIA GRONLANDIAE ANTIQUAE, has the following to say: "The air is more calm and settled in Greenland, and the cold less intense than in Iceland and Norway. An excessive frost, indeed, sometimes sets in, and the tempests rage more furiously than in any other part of the world; but they are of rare occurrence



all that portion of Greenland, lying west of Cape Farewell, between the modern Frederiksdal and Bredefjord, was colonized.\* A brisk traffic in whale oil and pelts sprang up with the mother country and Norway, and Greenland seemed in a fair way to prosperity.

Such, in brief, is the story gleaned from the pages of Erik the Red's Saga, describing the first known settlement of America by Europeans. Thus that part of the New World which we are accustomed to call Danish America began to play its part in European history. All this happened just five hundred and six years before Columbus set foot on San Salvador. That it constitutes a

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and short duration, and are never so violent as to kill cattle." Again, "People of property have made several attempts to grow corn, but the quantity grown has been very inconsiderable, the seed being destroyed by the severe frosts. The common people have never seen corn, nor do they know what bread is. In other respects the land is described as very fertile, abounding in rich pastures, and producing very large, fat oxen, cows, sheep and goats, which supply large dairies with butter and cheese." From Crantz, who writes on modern Greenland, we learn that "grass is found not only on boggy, sandy, or turf land, where it is commonly very poor and diminutive, but also in clefts of rocks filled with earth, and particularly near human habitations where it grows very luxuriantly.....Several attempts have been made to grow oats and barley. They send up as high a blade as in other countries, but seldom come into ear, and are in the very warmest situations prevented from ripening by the night frosts."—David Cranz, *THE HISTORY OF GREENLAND*, Vol. I. pp. 60 and 61.

\*After the destruction of the Greenland colonies people, misled by the names ÖST BYGD and VEST BYGD, came to think that the settlements must have stood to the east and

discovery and colonization of America, at least geographically speaking, there Greenland, the Anti-Chamber to the American Mainland. can, of course, be no disputing. As for being a discovery "in the true sense of the word," it is at any rate as truly a discovery as the landing of the Genoese navigator upon the outlying islands of America in 1492.\* Let us accept the colonization of Greenland, then, in the sense "of reaching the vestibule or anti-chamber of the Western Hemisphere," bearing well in mind that once upon the threshold, it is a natural sequence to enter the chamber. And this the Norsemen did as truly as ever did the Spaniards.

One of Erik the Red's followers was the Icelandic Herjulf Baardsson, who built his home on Herjulfssfjord, near the present Narksamiut. Now this Herjulf had a young and promising son,

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west of Cape Farewell. Mr. Crantz, as late as the eighteenth century, voices this notion in his HISTORY OF GREENLAND. Yet Ivar Baardsen, four centuries earlier, gave to the world a description of Greenland, wherein he locates both the settlements on the western coast. This work found little credence in the eyes of early scholars, though it has lately been verified as a result of the explorations undertaken by the Danish government. Captain Graah, in 1827—31, headed an expedition, which carefully explored the coasts of Greenland, mapping the shoreline and locating the ruins of the lost settlements.

\*No opponent of the Norse discovery in our day denies that the Icelanders, centuries before Columbus as born, settled Greenland, or Danish America, building there colonies that lasted 400 years—a period of time as long as all post-Columbian history—or that they lived under a perfectly



Bjarni by name, who at the time of his father's departure chanced to be in Norway on a trading tour. Returning to Iceland and finding the homestead in strange hands and the entire household gone, Bjarni determined to follow, not even taking time to unload his cargo. With a crew as undaunted as himself, he set sail and was soon on an unknown sea, swallowed up by fogs and foul weather. "For many days" he sailed by guess, and when land was finally sighted it was a country "covered with woods, without mountains, and with small hills inland." This, Bjarni thought, could not be Greenland, a land which he had been told was full of fjords and "ice hills," and entirely devoid of forests. So without stopping he "left the land on his larboard side, and let the stern turn from the land." Chased by a stiff breeze our voyagers kept on northward, several times seeing land in the distance; but as Bjarni repeatedly maintained, "this is not the land that we want," it was not approached any closer. Ten days had passed when the icy shoreline of Greenland came in view. "This," said Bjarni, "is most like what has been

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organized civil and ecclesiastical government. But what they do deny is, that THIS CONSTITUTES A REAL DISCOVERY. It is, of course, a perfect enough discovery GEOGRAPHICALLY considered, but—it MUST not be considered A REAL DISCOVERY in the TRUE SENSE, for that would needs knock the pegs from under the Columbian pedestal!

told me of Greenland, and here we shall take to  
 Bjarni Herjulfsson's land."\* Now as good fortune  
 son and the would have it, the icy crags  
 New West Land ahead were none other than  
 Herjulfssnes, the home of the long sought father.  
 Our weather tossed mariners were received with  
 much rejoicing; and we may rest assured that the  
 Yule-mead was measured out by no stinting  
 hand at the festivities following close upon the  
 reunion of father and son.

We are told that Bjarni was frequently blamed  
 for not having explored the wonderful land he  
 had stumbled upon. But so busy were the Scandi-  
 navians in other parts of the world, and so ordin-  
 ary an affair was it in those days with them to  
 find new shores, that the story did not excite very  
 much curiosity. One person, however, was much  
 taken up with the talk, and that was the illustri-  
 ous Leif, son of Erik the Red. This young man,  
 who is described as "large and strong, of noble  
 aspect, prudent and moderate in all things," spent

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\*The straightforward narrative of Bjarni's voyage is  
 found in the CODEX FLÖTOIENSIS. The student taking  
 the trouble to read it in detail will readily agree that the  
 story describes the first coasting voyage made by an  
 European along the mainland of America. And he will as  
 readily agree that the voyage covers some portion of the  
 continent lying between New England and Newfoundland  
 or Labrador. As De Costa remarks, "the discovery was  
 accidental, something like the discovery of America by  
 Columbus, who, in looking for the East Indies, stumbled  
 upon a new world." But it was very important in results,  
 insomuch as it pointed out a path for Leif the Lucky to  
 follow.

some very stirring months in the service of Olaf Trygvasson, king of Norway. About the year 998 he was converted to the Christian faith, and became a willing instrument for its propogation in the New World. When he returned home to Greenland, he brought along priests, who converted and baptized many of the people there. A church was established, and a bishop came out from Norway to take charge of it. All this happened in the early part of the year 1000—the same year in which Iceland accepted Christianity. Leif's mind was now so far releaved of responsibility that he could begin to think of affairs other than

Leif Eriksson's Expedition Sets sail, 1000.	the spreading of the Gospel. His one desire was to see with his own eyes the land Bjarni had found. Accordingly he sought out this voyager and bought of him the dragon now famous for the voyage it had made. Then he set about to equip the ship and collect a crew of trusty seamen. Old Erik agreed to accompany the expedition in compacity of commander; but being in feeble health, he went to the place of embarkation on horseback. On the way, however, the horse stumbled and threw him, and regarding this as a bad omen, he declined to go any farther, saying, "I do not believe it is given to me to discover more lands, and here I will abide."
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With a crew of thirty-five men, all told, the expedition sailed from Brattalid, and, retracing in

an inverted order the route taken by Bjarni, soon came in sight of land. It turned out to be a great barren plain, from the shore to the distant mountains covered with big, flat rocks, with not a vestige of vegetation, the whole covered with ice and snow. After landing and beholding the deso-

Helluland, late waste stretching before his  
 Its Location. eyes, Erik exclaimed, "we have not at any rate done like Bjarni about this land, that we have not been upon it; now will I give the land a name, and call it Helluland\*" From the description given in the saga, this land cannot fail to have been some point on the American coast opposite Greenland—the coast of Labrador, or very possibly the northern coast of Newfoundland. Some days later our explorers arrived at a well wooded country, where pine trees "fit for masts" grew in great abundance. Long, low beaches covered with white, glistening sand

Markland, stretched as far as the eye could  
 Its Location. reach; and, inland, lost themselves in flat plains on which the forests grew. Then Leif said, "We shall give this land a name according to its kind and call it Markland."† Critics now generally agree that this was some

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\*From HELLA, a flat stone.

†Markland (i. e. wood-land) is described in the saga as flat and low. This agrees admirably with the country near the present Halifax, which is so low that it is "not visible twenty miles off; except from the quarter deck of a seventy-four. Apostogon Hills have a long, level appearance, be-

part of the coast of Nova Scotia or possibly, of Cape Breton Island. The early belief that it should be sought on the southern coast of Newfoundland is now for the most part discredited. Again they put to sea and, spreading their square sail before a brisk northeaster, scudded merrily along, and two days later again drew near land. That this was New England there is hardly a doubt, though the precise locality cannot, with any accuracy, be pointed out. They landed on an island\* which some believe was Nantucket. From this place they continued along the coast to where a river emptied into the sea. This stream proved

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tween Cape Le Have and Port Medway, the coast to the seaward being level and low, and the shores with white rocks and low, barren points; from thence to Shelburne and Port Roseway, are woods." In Markland a later voyager, Thorfinn Karlsefni, slew a bear, an adventure remarkable only for the fact that it is one of the many instances where animals are introduced into the narrative, becoming an aid in limiting the localities of the several discoveries. To be sure this case is of no aid in limiting Markland, for although bears do abound in Nova Scotia, so do they all along our northeastern coast; but the point to be made here is, that the narrator did slay an animal found today upon the shores which they claim to have visited. Had they, to quote Fiske, "been drawing upon their imaginations or dealing with semi-mythical materials, they would as likely as not have lugged into the story elephants from Africa or hippogriffs from Dreamland; mediæval writers were blissfully ignorant of all canons of probability in such matters."

\*While this may or may not have been Nantucket Island, the consensus of opinion is, that this was some island off the Massachusetts coast. It is not so sure, however, that the island is now in existence. Nine hundred years have made many changes in our coast lines; so many, indeed,



to be the outlet of a lake\*, pleasantly situated and teeming with all manner of fresh fish.† So well did Leif like the place that he concluded to spend the winter there. Wooden booths were erected near the beach and the winter stores transferred to them. Our voyagers encountered many ad-

Leif Eriksson's ventures that must have been Winter In Vinland more than marvelous to them, the Good. as they appear almost incredulous to us at first sight. But, after all, they are only such as to strengthen a simple account of actual events. We hear, for example, that where they first landed "there was dew upon the grass; and having accidentally gotten some of the dew upon their hands and put it in their mouths, they thought they had never tasted anything as sweet as it was." This may sound just a mite as though

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that it is futile now to determine, with any degree of certainty, the exact location of Vinland by comparing the descriptions of the coasts, as we have them in the saga, with the New England coasts as we know them.

\*De Costa says, "The river was evidently Seaconnet Passage and Pocasset River; and the lake was Mount Hope Bay." See also below Horsford's NORUMBEGA.

†Here we again encounter one of the undeniable "thumb-marks" of the truthfulness of the narrative. In Prof. Rafn's *ANTIQUITATES AMERICANÆ*, p. 32, we find the following in the original Icelandic: "Hvorki skorti thar lax i anni ne i vatninu, ok staerra lax enn theiir hefdhi fyrr sedh," i. e., Neither was there a lack of salmon in the river and in the lake, and larger salmon than they had before seen. Salmon is not now so plentiful on the New England coast; but in the colonial times it was quite different. De Costa even maintains "a rule was made providing that masters should not oblige their apprentices to eat this fish more than twice a week."

the Norse adventurers had found a land abounding in a sort of manna, sweeter, if not so substantial as that which the Lord let fall for the hungry Israelites in the desert; and yet, it is nothing at all unheard of on the New England coast.\*

They were especially struck with the length of day in this strange land. According to their description, the sun could be seen just nine hours at winter solstice. Then, said they, it rose at

Unavailing Attempts to Seek the Exact Latitude of Vinland.	7:30 A. M. and set at 4:30 P. M.† This would fix the latitude at 41 Deg. 24 Min. 10 Sec.
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which places Leif's winter-quarters above Point Judith, on Narragansett Bay. But no great reliance can be placed on such statements as here made; for, as Fiske says, "remember that they (our voyagers) had no accurate instruments for measuring time, and that a difference of about fourteen minutes be-

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\*This is the so-called "honey dew" mentioned by Dr. Webb and others, and which actually tastes sweet.

†This statement may not be sufficient to settle the exact position of Vinland; but it certainly does show that the Norsemen had reached a latitude low enough to be considered remarkable. As their trading voyages reached every part of the British Isles and Normandy, the latitude of either of these countries was so well known to them that only a much more southerly position could have called for comment. Now it happens that latitude 41 Deg. 24 Min. 10 Sec. lies a few miles to the south of Portugal's northern boundary. This would be several hundred miles farther south than the Norsemen's accustomed stamping grounds, and as such, the difference in the length of day, sufficient to be noticed by them.



tween sunrise and sunset on the shortest winter day would make all the difference between Boston and Halifax.”\* The climate too was so mild as to draw comment from the hardy Greenlanders. Said they: “There was no frost in winter, and the grass was not much withered.”† The country seemed so good to them that cattle would hardly need house-feeding—a fact calculated to appeal to people coming, as the Norsemen, from regions of rigorous winters, where fodder was scarce and hard to secure.

Leif divided his crew into two divisions, which took day about exploring the country. On one of these expeditions a German named Tyrker, and who was Leif's foster-father, became separated from his companions and lost in the woods. The foster-son began to get uneasy on the old man's

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\*Fiske's Discovery Vol. I. p. 166.

†Some writers argue that the climate of the United States must have undergone the same changes as have taken place in Greenland since the discovery, and that the mildness of the Vinland winters should be explained on these grounds. Such argument hardly appears reasonable when the causes leading to the changes in Greenland are rightly understood, and it is born in mind that these causes are yet at work up in the North. We need only remember, too, that Thorfinn Karlsefni, only seven years later, found the American winters severe and hard to endure. It is much more likely that the winter of 1000-01 in Vinland was one of those mild, open winters that are liable to occur in most any part of the United States. The winter of 1889-90, says Fiske, was so mild around Boston, that had the Greenlanders arrived in that year, they might very naturally have described it as a winter “without frost and with grass hardly withered.”

account, when this person reappeared in a state of wildest excitement, grimacing and talking to himself in his own "south-country" tongue. As soon as he was quieted down—"for Leif saw that his father was not in his right mind"—and questioned as to what had befallen him, he answered: "I did not go much farther than they; and yet I have something altogether new to relate, for I found vines and grapes."\* This was great news to our explorers. For surely no better proofs were wanted that the land was a good one than that grapes abundant enough for wine-making were known to grow there! So Leif named Vinland Named. the land VINLAND; that is, the land of wine. The forests were now more systematically explored, and a tree called massur† found. But more important still, they

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\*Dr. Storm, in his STUDIES ON THE VINLAND VOYAGES, points out that the wild grape is unknown north of  $47^{\circ}$ —the latitude of Kent, New Brunswick. In Newfoundland, he says, it is entirely unknown. Here again we have a reference aiding us to limit Vinland to the north. We may positively assert that Leif's discovery lay south of the parallel of  $47^{\circ}$  north latitude, i. e. south of Cape Breton Island. And then how far south? As grapes are not very plentiful north of Halifax, the very fact that the discoverers found them in great abundance, indicates that Nova Scotia must be passed by. In Massachusetts and Rhode Island they are, on the other hand, found growing luxuriantly down to the very shoreline. Here, surely, Vinland must be sought!

†By some wiseacres it is maintained that the Norsemen hereby meant mahogany! Now there is nothing whatsoever in the statement to base such a ridiculous assertion upon. Being anything but accustomed to judge of different sorts of wood, we should expect them to find in a New

came upon "self sown wheat fields."\* After this the whole crew set to work cutting timber with which they filled the hold of the ship. Then great quantities of grapes—it is said the whole stern-boat† full—were carried aboard; after that they set sail for Greenland. On the homeward voyage Leif had the good fortune to rescue a crew of fifteen ship-wrecked sailors. Erik the Red thought his son lucky in finding Vinland and in saving the ship-crew. But now whether it was for the one reason or the other, Leif was ever after known as Leif THE LUCKY.‡ Vinland, too, from the glowing accounts about it, took the name of Vinland THE GOOD.||

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England forest more than one kind of tree striking them as curious and valuable, and worthy of being carried home to Greenland as samples of the new land's productions.

\*If these "self-sown" fields were in reality the patches of maize, or Indian corn, as Fiske believes, we have in them a further help to aid in limiting Vinland's whereabouts. For maize requires long and very hot seasons to mature, and such conditions can hardly be said to be met with north of parallel 44°, which passes through southern Maine. Here again our presumption must favor Massachusetts or Rhode Island.

†The saga has it: "Sva er sagt at eptirbatr theirra var fylddr af vinberjum," i. e. so it is said that their stern-boat was filled with wine berries.

‡"After that time people called him, Leif the Fortunate; but his father Erik said that these two things went against one another; that Leif had saved the crew of the ship, and delivered them from death, and that he had [brought] that bad man into Greenland, that is what he called the priest."—De Costa's translation of Rafn's *ANTIQUITATES AMERICANAÆ*.

||The whole of the story of Leif's voyage is told in the *CODEx FLATOIENSIS*.

## Attempts at Exploration and Colonization.

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"From shores where Torfinn set thy banner  
Their latest children seek thee now."

—BAYARD TAYLOR.

Soon after their home-coming hoary old Erik departed this life for the joys of boisterous Valhalla. He at least was steadfast in the faith of his fathers to the very last.\* Leif, as eldest son and legal head of the household, found his time too much occupied with personal concerns to give further attention to Vinland. This duty then fell upon his younger brother Thorvald, who set out in the year 1002 with a crew of thirty men and Thorvald Eriks-son's Expedition, without any trouble and winter-1002.

ed there, spending the time alternately in exploring and in fishing the fat salmon which he found in abundance. The following spring

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\*Authorities differ on this point. It is certain that only a few months before his death Erik had nothing but evil to speak of the priests. On the other hand the saga has it that his was finally baptized. It says: "But after much urging Erik was baptized, as well as all the people of Greenland." At best this conversion could hardly have been of the heart.

he sent some men in the long-boat westward along the coast—some writers think it probable that they reached as far east as the present New York harbor. "They found no abode for man or beast; but on an island far towards the west, they found a corn barn constructed of wood."\* In the autumn they returned to Leif's Booths. In the spring of the year 1004, Thorvald undertook a more extended expedition to the "eastward, and towards the north along the land."† "Opposite to a cape," they were driven ashore by foul weather, and their vessel wrecked. Thorvald and his men spent much time in repairing the damaged dragon, after which they set up the broken keel as a landmark on the cape, and called the place KIALARNES, or Keel Cape. From here he seems to have crossed Cape Cod Bay to the Plymouth side and proceeded up the coast to the vicinity of Boston. Here the Norse-

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\*The term "corn" with the Norsemen meant any kind of cereal grain; as, rye, barley, wheat, etc. The expression "corn barn" could therefore embrace a variety of grain, not necessarily Indian corn; but since maize was the only great staple raised by the Indians, the chances are, that is what is meant. This is "thumb-mark" number two indicating the location of Vinland within the corn belt.

†De Costa, Rafn and others believe that this indicates a voyage northward around Cape Cod, where they were blown ashore and left their broken keel standing upon the beach as a land-mark to be found later by the Karlsefni expedition. This is, as stated above, treading on dangerous ground, with nothing to gain; so we may pass it without discussion.



men had their first experience with the natives, scornfully spoken of as *Skrællings*.<sup>\*</sup> Thorvald and his men surprised and captured eight of these despised American Red Men—which they of course were—and without any cause whatever, put them to death. This ill-starred act was speedily avenged by their enraged kinmen, who made a furious onslaught on the bloody invaders. They were, however, repulsed; but not before the chieftain, Thorvald, fell mortally wounded.<sup>†</sup> “I have gotten an arrow under my arm,” said he, “for an arrow fled between the ship and the shield, in

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<sup>\*</sup>*SKRÆLLING* in Norwegian signifies a weakling, a person of inferior physical build. The epithet as used in the present connection was later extended to the puny Eskimos, who were as yet unknown to the Norsemen, not yet having emerged from the interior of Greenland. See below “*LIBELLUS ISLANDORUM*” in chapter on *ALLUSIONS TO VINLAND FROM OTHER SOURCES*. Crantz, Rafn, De Costa and other writers are of the opinion that these people were Eskimos. They saw in them an inferior people, gradually pushed northward by the Indians, who had entirely displaced them when Columbus arrived. The only reason put forward in defence of such an argument is, that Thorvald called the people he found by the name which *LATER* was uniformly used in Greenland, when speaking of the natives there. Just as though he should be expected to waste his time in ethnological classifications of “weaklings” in Vinland! In Norse eyes, they [Eskimos and Indians alike] certainly must have appeared with many points in common, a mighty poor set—“*Skrællings*” all of them. The Eskimos appear for ages to have lived as a sub-polar race; and as for the Vinland natives, they undoubtedly were Algonquin Indians.

<sup>†</sup>Though Thorvald and many of his men had been baptized, the religion of the “White Christ” does not seem to have had any specially softening influence upon their



under my arm, and there is the arrow, and it will prove a mortal wound to me." Speaking thus, the bold son of Erik died; and his comrades gave him a Christian burial at a promontory which they dubbed Krossanes, or Cross Cape, from the cross erected above the grave. Thorvald's crew later returned to Greenland, having but a sorry tale to tell Leif.

Yet another son of Erik, Thorstein, with his wife Gudrid and a crew of twenty-five men, made an attempt to overcome perverse fate and colonize Vinland. This was in the year 1005. His primary object was undoubtedly to find Thorvald's body and carry it home for burial in consecrated soil. However this may be, so sore was his ship beset by storm and foul weather that

Thorstein Eriks-  
son's Attempt  
to Reach  
Vinland, 1005.

neither Vinland nor Krossanes was found. The weather-tossed mariners at length sought refuge on the Greenland coast, at

Lysifjord in the western settlement, where Thorstein and many of his crew were carried off by an

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cruel mode of warfare. Human life sat as easy upon their hands as in days of yore. It is decidedly gratifying at this point to hear how Thorvald ordered the defence of his ship. "We shall put up our war screens along the gun-wales of the ship," he said, "and defend ourselves as best we can, BUT NOT USE OUR WEAPONS MUCH AGAINST THEM." The dark mood seems to have been dispelled, and pity for an inferior people fighting at a disadvantage, stays the bloody hand.

unknown epidemic. The sorrowing Gudrid later returned with her husband's body to their late home on Eriksfjord.

But such discouraging beginnings by no means put an end to Norse colonization in Vinland. The most serious attempt, and withal the most important, was yet to be made under the leadership of the illustrious Thorfinn Karlsefni. He was a merchant prince of Iceland, a man of many noble qualities, descended from one of the proudest families there. A trading voyage brought him to Brattalid in 1006, where he spent the winter at the hospitable family-seat of the departed Erik. Here he met and immediately fell in love with Gudrid of our former acquaintance, who was a "grave and dignified woman, and therewith sensible, and knew well how to carry herself among strangers." The marriage was celebrated the same winter, and in this way Thorfinn inherited whatever right or claim the deceased Thorstein might have had to Vinland. "The conversation often turned, at Brattalid, on the discovery of Vinland the Good, and they said that a voyage there had great hope of gain." Thorfinn, a professional trader and merchant, could not let such a chance for increasing his wealth pass unheeded; and so concluded to lead a colony thither. This new expedition, which sailed early in 1007, in-

cluded besides Karlsefni and Gudrid with their retainers, a goodly company of determined colonists,\* numbering upwards of 160 souls, all told, carrying with them cattle and seed, and implements for tilling the soil.

The little flotilla retraced the now historic shores of Helluland where "there was a great number of foxes,"† and of Markland where they encountered many wild animals and "slew a bear." After some days Kialarnes hove in view and was recognized by the broken keel still standing erect on the sandy beach. A little later a landing was effected and the crew given a well-earned rest. Meanwhile Thorfinn sent two Scotch thralls, Haki and Hekia, inland on a scouting expedition, with orders to return as soon as they should discover the true nature of the land. Their report was extremely favorable and in their estimation the land flowed with milk and honey.‡ A permanent landing was made at a

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\*There were in the company three hardy sea-captains who had accompanied Thorfinn from Iceland; namely, Snorri Thorbrandsson of Alptafjord, Bjarni Grimolfsson of Breidafjord, and Thorhall Gamlason of Austfjord. Others of special mention were, the man Thorvard and his wife Freydis, who was a natural daughter of Erik the Red.

†These animals are found throughout all the northwestern part of the American continent, and as such the statement is not in itself at all limiting; but the fact remains that they found FOXES and not FAIRYLAND FAUNA in Helluland.

‡"When they returned one had in his hand a bunch of

place called Stream Bay, where they wintered. Fish was scarce that winter and by spring some few dissatisfied spirits deserted the colony and set out for Greenland.\* But the main body, still undaunted, set a southward course and "sailed along till they came to a river flowing out from the land through a lake into the sea, where there were sandy shoals, where it was impossible to pass up, except with the highest tide."† Thorfinn's perseverance was well repaid. For here were

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grapes, and the other an ear of corn.—De Costa, p. 53. Here again, a mention of corn.

\*The colonists had depended on finding abundant supplies of fish in the New World. However, the winter passed, and much of the summer with it, and no fish. Let the early Viking have all the food and drink he cared for, and he would be content almost anywhere; but without these in abundance, he could see no virtue in the fairest of lands. Thorhall the hunter, one of Erik the Red's liegemen, headed the malcontents. One day he sang as he carried water to the ship:

"People said when hither I  
Came, that I the best  
Drink would have, but the land  
It justly becomes me to blame;  
I, a warrior, am now obliged  
To bear the pail;  
Wine touches not my lips,  
But I bow down to the spring."

Later in the summer, together with some seven or eight of his satellites, he sailed for home; but storm drove the ship ashore on the Irish coast, where they were all enslaved. During the first year out, a son was born unto Thorfinn and Gudrid. This child Snorro became the ancestor of a multitude of Norwegian and Danish great men; such as, the antiquarian Finn Magnussen and the sculptor Bertel Thorwaldsen.

†Some antiquarians take this to mean Mount Hope Bay.

"self-sown wheat" in patches in the lowlands along the shore; while in the higher places grapes were abundant. The streams too teemed with fish and the woods were full of game.\* Above the lake a place was chosen where houses were erected in anticipation of winter; but this second winter turned out to be so mild that "there was no snow, and all their cattle fed themselves on the grass."† A profitable barter sprang up with the Skrællings, who were eager to exchange valuable pelts for worthless bits of red cloth and other trinkets. But they soon came to blows. For one day "a great number of Skrællings' ships were seen coming from the south like a rushing torrent, all the poles‡ turned from the sun, and they all yelled

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The Taunton River passes through it, and reaches the sea by way of Pocasset River and Seaconnet Passage.

\*"They dug pits where the land began, and where the land was highest; and when the tide went down, there were sacred fish in the pits." The saga here describes an ingenious method adopted by the colonists to catch New England halibut. The Icelandic word was "helgir fiskar," i. e. holy fish. The modern Dano-Norwegian is Helleflyndre.

†This seems to be a parallel to Leif Eriksson's winter in Vinland and the explanation given for that instance will apply here. The winter may indeed have appeared much milder to these people coming from regions of almost perpetual ice and snow than the case really warranted. But it does not seem in the least surprising that their cattle could "rough it" through winter; for the cattle of Iceland and Greenland must have been inured to much lower temperatures than they suffered in New England.

‡The "poles" here referred to were strange weapons—the "daemon's head"—spoken of by Mr. Schoolcraft in his ARCHIVES OF ABORIGINAL KNOWLEDGE, used by the old



very loud." The colonists rallied around their chiefs and a furious hand to hand struggle ensued. We are told that the Norsemen, who usually knew no fear, were for once seized by panic, and actually left the battlefield ignominiously routed, when they were rallied by the undaunted Freydis, who by her "bærserker"\* actions so terrified the superstitious natives that they fled headlong to their canoes. The colonists were not a second time molested; but such inroads had the Skrællings made on their strength that it was concluded to abandon the young colony. On this return voyage occurred the much lamented loss of noble Bjarni Grimolfsson and a great part of his crew.† Karlsefni reached Greenland in safety, wherefrom he proceeded to his old home in Iceland. There his son Snorro, who was three years old when they left Vinland, became a man of much importance.

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time Algonquins. This consisted of a heavy mass of rock sewed up in a skin and attached to a pole. At close quarters it could be plunged with disastrous results into an enemy's boat or upon his head, causing both confusion and death. One of our most remarkable "thumb-marks."

\*From bærserk, or bare-shirt. Many of the bravest and wildest of the early Northmen had a strange fashion of working themselves up into a frenzy before engaging in battle. They would blindly strike away at any obstacle in their way, and soon became oblivious to pain, heat or cold. As shirts were stripped on such occasions, we may readily see the significance of the word.

†Bjarni's ship was attacked by worms (the TEREDO) and began to sink. "They had a boat which was smeared with



The next chapter of Vinland history is written in blood, and Freydis acts the part of the evil genius. As the story goes, the brothers Helgi and Finnbogi arrived from Norway about the time that Karlsefni returned to Greenland. The restless Freydis planned a new expedition in which she induced the brothers to take part. An agreement was reached specifying that each (Freydis and the brothers) should have thirty fighting men, besides women. "But Freydis broke this, and had five men more, and concealed them; and the brothers knew nothing of it until they arrived at Vinland." The brothers arrived

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sea oil, for worms do not attack that. They went into the boat, and then saw that it could not hold them all. Then said Bjarni, 'as the boat will not hold more than half of our men, it is my counsel that lots should be drawn for those to go into the boat, for it shall not be according to rank.' This, they all thought so generous an offer, that none would oppose it. They then did so that lots were drawn, and it fell to Bjarni to go into the boat, and the half of the men with him, for the boat had not room for more. But when they had gotten into the boat, an Icelandic man that was in the ship, said: 'Dost thou mean Bjarni to leave me here?' Bjarni said: 'So it seems.' Then said the other: 'Very different was the promise to my father, when I went with thee from Iceland, than thus to leave me, for thou said we shall both share the same fate.' Bjarni said: 'It shall not be thus; go down into the boat and I will go up into the ship, since I see that thou art so anxious to live.' Then Bjarni went up into the ship and this man down into the boat, and after that they went on their voyage, until they came to Dublin in Ireland, and there told these things; but it is most people's belief that Bjarni and his companions were lost in the worm sea, for nothing was heard of them after that time." NARRATIVE OF THORFINN KARLSEFNI, De Costa's Version, pp. 63-64.

at Leif's booths in advance of Freydis, and naturally enough took possession of the huts. They were busily engaged carrying in their winter stores when she appeared upon the scene. "Then said Freydis, 'why are you carrying your things in here?' 'Because we thought,' said they, 'that the whole of the agreement with us should be held.' She said, 'Leif lent the houses to me, not to you.' Then said Helgi, 'in evil, we brothers cannot stive with thee.' " With this they bore their goods away with them, and erected new huts farther from the beach. The little community spent the autumn months in cutting timber for their cargo, and but little time was given for a

A Bloody Chap-  
ter of  
Vinland History,  
1011—12.

renewal of the quarrel. But with the coming of winter all these things were changed. "The brothers proposed to have some games for amusement to pass time. So it was done for a time, till discord came among them, and the games were given up and none went from one house to the other; and things went on so during a great part of the winter." Freydis now determined the destruction of Finnbogi and Helgi with all their followers. She complained to her husband "that the brothers had given her evil words and struck her," and demanded their blood in atonement for the insult. The weak-minded Thorvard, stung to exasperation by his violent spouse, made a dastardly night attack upon the

unsuspecting brothers; seized them together with all their men, and put them all to death in cold blood. To cap the tragedy, Freydis with her own hand brained five women whom even Thorvard had not the heart to slay. This deed of blood accomplished, she seized the murdered ones' staunch ship and goods and returned home to Eriksfjord, where she lived detested by all who knew the story and forsaken by even her kinsmen. For, so concludes the saga, when Leif learned the whole truth he said: " 'I do not care to treat my sister as she deserves; but this I will foretell them, that their posterity will never thrive.' And it went so that nobody thought anything of them but evil, from that time."

With this deed of blood end what are called the MAJOR NARRATIVES; but, before we take final leave of this part of our discussion, something should be said about the allusions made to Vinland by other writers.

## Allusions to Vinland from Other Sources.

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“ ‘They called the country Vinland.’

‘We know it,’ said I, ‘I am a Vinlander.’ ”

—BAYARD TAYLOR.

It is difficult to pick up a single Icelandic work on history, written within the range of two to three hundred years after Leif's discovery, which does not contain some reference to Vinland. The whole body of Icelandic history from this period is full of such allusions. The people generally appear to have been so well acquainted with the details of the discovery that historians, incidentally touching upon the subject in the course of their writings, found it unnecessary to pause for explanation. Greenland and Vinland were localities as matter-of-fact to them as Japan and China now are to us.

As Ari Thorgilsson Frodhi was born in the year 1067, his LANDNAMA-BÖK\* and ISLENDINGA-BÖK were written while the memory of Vinland was still fresh in the minds of all. Nothing, therefore,

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\*Several references to America appear in this work. One describing the adventures of Ari Maarsson in Hvíttramanna-land has been mentioned above. Of more importance is the following passage taken from part III., ch. X. of this

could be more significant than the testimony that they bear. The ISLENDINGA-BÖK, unfortunately, is no longer in existence. This is of great regret to scholars who feel pretty certain that it contained much valuable material pertaining to Vinland. For there remains, from Ari's pen, an abridgement of the work "LIBELLUS ISLANDORUM"—which makes very pertinent mention of that

"Libellus country. Speaking of Erik the Islandorum." Red and his followers in Greenland, Ari says: "They found there, both in the east and the west part of the land, vestiges of human habitations, fragments of boats and stone implements; so from this one might draw the conclusion that the people of the race which inhabited Vinland, and which the Greenlanders (i. e. the Norse discoverers) called Skrællings, must have roamed there."\* This passage is important indeed! For the writer certainly had in mind the ferocious American natives of Karlsefni's day, stories of whose prowess were still fresh in the people's minds. If we are to take the historian Thorfæus as authority, the Skrællings, or Eskimos, did not make their appearance in the Norse settlements in Greenland much before the year 1349.

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entirely reliable genealogical table: "Their son was Thordr Hest-höfuhi, father of Karlsefni, who found Vinland the Good."

\*Rafn in his *ANTIQUITATES AMERICANÆ* p. 207, says that they "fundo thar manna vister bæthi austr ok vestr a



This would give Ari ample grounds for inferring that these remains had been left by a people akin to the natives known to live in Vinland.

Snorri Sturlason wrote his *HEIMSKRINGLA* nearly a hundred years after Ari's *ISLENDINGA-BÖK* appeared. He devotes a brief chapter of this great work to the introduction of Christianity in Greenland, wherein he finds occasion to tell how Leif Eriksson received the cognomen "the Lucky." In the words of Snorri: "That same spring, King

The Olaf (Trygvasson) sent Leif to-  
Heimskringla gether with a priest and other  
book-learned men to Greenland, there to proclaim Christianity; but Leif did not alone arrive safe in Greenland that summer, he found also on the voyage Vinland the Good, and saved some shipwrecked folk, who were driven about helpless in a wreck. Afterward they called him Leif the Lucky, for", etc.\* Another document, the *KRISTNI SAGA*, supplementing the *LANDNAMA-BÖK*, and also assigned to Ari Frodhi, contains in substance the same story. And it is not at all unlikely that Snorri's statement is borrowed from it.

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landi ok kæiplabrot ok steinsmithi, that es af thvi ma seilja, at thar hafdhi thessconar thjoth farith es Vinland hefer bygt, ok Grænendinger calla Skrelinga."

\**HEIMSKRINGLA*, chapter LI. Snorri writes as though he believed Leif discovered Vinland and saved the shipwrecked sailors on his voyage to Greenland. This is of course a mistake; but does not weaken the statement as far as the existence of Vinland is concerned. Again, in a



The EYRBYGGJA SAGA, written round about the year 1250, furnishes a good picture of early Iceland. It dwells upon the settlement of Breidafjord and other sections of the island; but is especially interesting because of the inside view it gives of the tenth-century Icелander's home-life, his feuds with his neighbors, his relations with foreign lands, and finally his religious tenets. The

The Eyrbyggja Saga. Eyrbyggja mentions the Icелander Thorbrand, whose two sons Snorri and Thorleif went to Greenland. And concludes by saying, that Snorri later went to Vinland the Good with Karlsefni, and was killed in a battle with the Skrællings.\* From the narrative of Karlsefni's Saga we will remember the flight of Karlsefni and his men from the Skrællings. Freydis brought up the rear of the panic-stricken Norsemen and followed them into the woods. Here she found the body of Snorri Thorbrandsson, who had been killed by the Skrællings, for "there stood a flat stone stuck in his head."

Another early document, GRETTS SAGA, makes

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broader sense, he may have considered the expedition to Vinland as a part of Leif's Greenland voyage, since it was a direct consequence of the latter.

\*"Efter forliget imellem Eyrbyggerne og Alftfjordingerne toge Thorbrands sønner, Snorre og Thorleif, til Grönland. Efter den sidste er Kimbevaag imellem jöklerne opkaldt, og han boede i Grönland til sin alderdom, men Snorre tog til Vinland hint Gode med Karlsefne, og faldt der i en strid med Skrællingerne."—N. M. Petersen, FORTÆLLING OM EYRBYGGERNE, p. 82.

mention of the sturdy old sea-captain Thorhall Gamlason who, it will be born in mind, came with Karlsefni from Iceland and Grettis Saga. accompanied him to Vinland. After the colony was abandoned, says the saga, this worthy returned to Iceland, settled on his old home-stead there, and was ever after known as Thorhall the Vinlander.\*

Nor was the knowledge of the discovery limited to the people of Greenland and Iceland. Before 1073, its fame was spoken throughout the whole Scandinavian North. For in that year Adam von Bremen published his "HISTORIA ECCLESIASTICA" in which he gave an account of the conversion of the Northern kingdoms. While compiling this work, Adam made a trip to Denmark, and was well received at the court of King Svend Estridsen.

As this monarch came to the throne in 1047, the visit must have taken place between that year and 1073. Adam heard some marvelous stories up there in the North; and, like the scholar that he was, wrote them down. All these fragments of history and geography were brought together under the title "DE SITU DANIÆ" and appended to his church history. The account abounds in statements that often sound Adam von Bremen's "De situ almost incredible; he accordingly hastens to inform his readers that no part of it is guess-work, but "based Daniae."

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\*GRETTIS SAGA. pp. 22, 70.

upon the trustworthy reports of the Danes.”\* Adam speaks of Vinland as an island (region), so called from the wild grapes growing there. King Svend told him, he continues, that these grapes made excellent wine. Furthermore, corn grew in that strange region without cultivation.† These things must have sounded marvelous in European ears; especially as he adds: “After this island nothing inhabitable is met with in that ocean, but everything beyond is covered with unendurable ice and boundless darkness.”‡ Adam von Bremen’s account becomes very significant when we consider that he got his information from men who stood very close to the voyagers, and who may even have had it from the mouth of some survivor of these expeditions.

With the Publication of the “*HISTORIA ECCLESIASTICA*” the Holy See’s attention was drawn to the Scandinavian North, and we read that new dioceses in “the islands of the ocean” were established. In 1112 Erik Upssi (Gnupsson) was appointed “bishop of Greenland and Vinland in

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\* —“non fabulosa opinione, sed certa comperimus relatione Danorum.”—*DESCRIPTIO INSULARUM AQUILONIS*, cap. 38 apud *HISTORIA ECCLESIASTICA*.

† “Praeterea unam adhuc insulam (regionam) recitavit a multis in eo repertam oceano, quæ dicitur Vinland, eo quid ibi vites sponte nascentur, vinum bonum gerentes; nam et fruges ibi seminatas abundare.”—*Id.* cap. 38.

‡ Postquam insulam terra nulla invenitur habitabilis in illo oceano, sed omnia quæ ultra sunt glacie intolerabili ac caligine immensa plena sunt.—*Id.* cap. 38.

*partibus infidelium.*" The ANNALES ISLANDORUM REGII and several other histories mention

Other Mention of Vinland that Bishop Erik left his bishopric in Greenland and went to Vinland, ostensibly for the purpose of converting the heathen.\* After this, from time to time through the twelfth, thirteenth and first half of the fourteenth century, mention is made of the New World. As late as 1347 there came "a ship from Greenland, which had sailed to Markland, and there were eighteen men aboard." This vessel was doubtless one of the many making regular trips to Markland after timber. And had it not been driven from its course and forced to seek shelter in Iceland, "the probability is," as Reeves says, "that this voyage would never have found mention in Icelandic chronicles, and all knowledge of it must have vanished as completely as did the colony to which the Markland visitors belonged."†

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\*Dr. Enander says that Bishop Erik "went to Vinland to strengthen the Norsemen there in their Christian faith." Nothing should please us more than to have this statement substantiated with proof; for that would, of course, as the writer asserts, definitely prove that the discoverers had succeeded in maintaining colonies for 114 years, at the least. But, alas! this appears only to be another of the speculations that have done so much to discredit the whole story. Colonies may have been attempted and established after Freydis' day; and may even have lingered down to 1121. One thing, however, is certain, and that is, that no proof to this effect has yet been forthcoming. See Horsford on NORUMBEGA.

†See Reeves, FINDING OF VINLAND THE GOOD. 1900.

Accounts of this nature show that voyages between Greenland and the mainland were continued well into the fourteenth century.

Finally, there are still extant several Icelandic treatises on geography, written between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, describing the earth according to the notions of those early days. Though faulty in many particulars, these documents do show that the Icelanders had a pretty clear understanding of Vinland's whereabouts. In what professes to be "A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE WHOLE EARTH" we read: "Beyond Greenland, southward, is Helluland; beyond that is Early Geograph- Markland; from thence it is not ical Treatises. far to Vinland," etc. Again in the collection of manuscripts called the "GRIPLA:" "South from thence (i. e. Greenland) is Helluland, which is called Skrællings' land. Thence it is not far to Vinland the Good, which some think goes out to Africa. Between Vinland and Greenland, is Ginnungagah, which runs from the sea called MARE OCEANUM, and surrounds the whole earth."\*

The historical and geographical fragments enumerated above, while neither any too full nor any too numerous, are yet sufficient to convince all fair-minded scholars of the existence of a well-

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\*These documents may be found in Rafn's *ANTIQUITATES AMERICANAE* respectively on page 283 and page 292.



grounded general knowledge of the discovery all the way from Adam von Bremen down to and long after the life-time of Hauk Erlendsson, covering a period of something like three centuries.



## The Decline and Loss of the Greenland Colonies.

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"In that drear spot, grim Desolation's lair,  
No sweet remain of life encheers the sight:  
The dancing heart's blood in an instant there  
Would freeze to marble. Mingling day and night  
(Sweet interchange which makes our labors light,)  
Are there unknown; while in the summer skies  
The sun rolls ceaselessly round his heavenly height,  
Nor ever sets till from the scene he flies,  
And leaves the long bleak night of half the year to rise."  
--HENRY KIRKE WHITE.

The development, decline and loss of the Greenland colonies may be told in a very few words. The two settlements gradually enlarged their boundaries till all the best lands between modern Frederiksdal and Bredefjord had been incorporated. Thorfæus Thormodus is authority for the statement that early in the fourteenth century the ÖST BYGD embraced nineteen peopled fjords, numbering in all one hundred and ninety *villae*, or farmsteads. These were distributed into twelve church districts, eleven having small local churches, the twelfth, being the seat of the Gardar bishopric, having a cathedral church. In all, the settlement seems to have contained between thirty-five hundred and four thousand souls. The VEST BYGD

was smaller and more sparsely settled, embracing no more than nine peopled fjords with about one hundred farmsteads, distributed into four parishes. Its population, very probably, never exceeded two thousand souls.

The four hundred years of Greenland history are little else than a tedious account of feuds and murders—in this respect very similar to Icelandic history. The early colonists carried on a lucrative trade with the mother-country and Norway, and became both thrifty and well-to-do. The fjord-districts supported large numbers of cattle, sheep and goats, while the waters along the shore abounded in fish, whales and many species of seals. The islands and inland, moreover, teemed with white bears, foxes, sables, martins and other important fur-bearing animals. Valuable pelts, whale oil, skins, eider down and, according to some, butter and cheese were exported in exchange for other necessities of life. Just how far northward the Greenlanders penetrated in their exploring and hunting expeditions is difficult to say. The explorations of Sir Edward Parry and Captain Graah have, however, thrown some interesting light on this question. Upon the island of Kingitorsook in Baffin's Bay, with a north latitude of 56 Deg. 55 Min., these explorers found several artificial earth-mounds surmounted by stones bearing runic inscriptions. One of these

reads:—"Erling Sighvatson and Bjarni Thordarson and Eindrid Oddson raised these marks and cleared ground\* on Saturday before Ascension week, 1135.† But Prof. Rafn narrates still greater achievements in the way of polar exploration,

The Northernmost which go far to show that  
 Limit of Norse Scandinavian Nansens and  
 Exploration in America. Nordenskjolds are not con-

fined to our generation. He describes an expedition made in the year 1166 under the auspices of the Gardar priests. "They made their way into the most distant portion of the sea, and saw glaciers south of them as far as the eye could reach. They also saw indications of the Skrællings, but did not land, on account of the number of the bears.'‡ It would appear from calculations made at the time, that the expedition attained the surprisingly high latitude of 75 Deg. 46 Min.

The first mention we have of Skrællings in Greenland dates back to a hundred years before this expedition, when hunters occasionally encountered them in the course of distant hunting-trips. But we hear of no serious conflicts with them prior to the middle of the fourteenth century. In

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\*Some writers draw the conclusion from this expression—"cleared ground"—that Greenland was formerly densely wooded. Now to my mind it appears much more probable that they referred to an article both troublesome and numerous on those shores—stones.

†Laing, HEIMSKRINGLA, i, 152.

‡Quoted by me from DeCosta, p. XXX, iii.

the year 1339, according to Thorfæus, they suddenly made their appearance in the VEST BYGD, where they killed eighteen of the colonists and carried off two boys and much cattle. This is our last report of the ill-fated settlement, which must have been destroyed shortly after this time. The emboldened Skrællings rapidly extended their limits, destroying all outlying farmsteads. In 1379 they made a concerted attack upon the ÖST BYGD, causing a terrible destruction of life and property. The invaders were aided in this work of extermination by a chain of unfortunate circumstances. The ravages of the Black Death began to be felt throughout Europe in 1348. The dread scourge was everywhere present—on the sea as

<p>Causes Leading to the De- struction of the Greenland Colo- nies.</p>	<p>well as on land. Ships drifted aimlessly about the high seas, their crews dead and putrifying on deck, carrying ruin to the</p>
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shores they chanced to strike. In this way the disease reached the Scandinavian North and Iceland, where it was virulent beyond all power of description. Though Greenland appears to have escaped the plague, she could not avoid the consequences that it carried in its wake.\* For years sea-faring was almost paralyzed in the North, and

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\*Crantz is of the opinion that the Black Death did reach Greenland, and that it carried away many of the population. Many other good authorities, however, positively affirm the contrary.

nowhere were the attendant evils felt more keenly than in Greenland. Poverty took the place of almost opulence, and ruin seemed imminent to the ill-starred ÖST BYGD, already hard pressed by the Eskimos. About the same time the home government of Norway-Denmark committed a blunder that did much to hasten the impending doom. Queen Margarete, our 'Northern Semiramis,' daughter of Valdemar III, king of Denmark, and wife of King Haakon VIII of Norway, succeeded to the rule of these countries in 1380 and 1387.

Discreet though she generally was, Margarete made the traffic with Iceland, the Færoes and Greenland "a royal monopoly which could only be carried on in ships belonging to, or licensed by, the sovereign."\* Merchants not lessees of the government were prosecuted by the Crown and forced to abandon their trade with Greenland altogether. The forlorn colony sank gradually into wretchedness, and fell an easy prey to the swarms of Eskimos who completed its ruin during the first or second decade of the fifteenth century.

Before we leave Greenland *dying* for Greenland *dead*, a more than passing interest demands a brief halt for a final glimpse at the ÖST BYGD, as recorded in a narrative of northern exploration, published at Venice in 1558. This work contains the voyages of the celebrated Zeno brothers, and

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\*Laing, HEIMSKRINGLA I. 147.



is published under the rather lengthy title, "*De i commentarii i del Viaggio in Persiadi M-Caterine Zeno il K. et dello scoprimento dell' Isole Frislanda, Eslanda, Engroneland, Estotilanda et Icaria, fatto sotto il Polo Artico de due fratelli Zeni,*" etc. Now the Zenos were men of quality at Venice. The father of this particular generation, Pietro Dracone, is famous in history as a commander of the Christian League in its struggle against the Turks during the fourteenth century. The sons, Carlo, Nicolo and Antonio, were likewise of great renown. They added much to their family glory in the war with Gonoa (1378-80), and Carlo in particular became an object of worship by his countrymen. About the year 1390 Nicolo fitted out a vessel and started to see the world. Soon after entering the Atlantic he was caught in a storm and driven along northward, until at length the ship was cast upon the Færoes and wrecked. Only the timely arrival of Sir Henry Sinclair, King Haakon VI's representative in Scottish waters, saved the Venetians from the fate of shipwrecked mariners, usual in those barbarous times—plunder and death. The grateful Nicolo entered this high-born noble's service, soon rising to the position of commander of Sinclair's entire fleet. This new life was pleasing to the adventurous Venetian, who sent such stirring descriptions of Northern life to his brothers that Antonio also conclud



ed to voyage thither. He too was well received and remained in Sinclair's pay fourteen years, returning to Venice in 1406. Nicolo, meanwhile, was seized with a desire to visit Greeland of which he had heard so much from his conversations with the island Norse. The voyage to the ÖST BYGD occurred in the month of July in what appears to have been 1394. This, it will be recollected, was many years after the Eskimos had destroyed the VEST BYGD and some years after the Greenland trade was declared a royal monopoly. Nicolo

Nicolo Zeno in      remained there only a short  
Greenland,      time as the climate of this high  
1394.      latitude proved too much for

his constitution; his death occurred in the Færoes the very next year. Antonio now succeeded to his deceased brother's office; and he, too, made a voyage of discovery in the Atlantic Ocean, which will be mentioned later on. Suffice it here to say, that letters and charts describing these voyages were sent from time to time to their brother Carlo at home in Venice. These were placed away among the family archives, and more than a century later, in 1558, such as had not been destroyed were published by Nicolo Zeno, a direct descendant of Antonio. Of great interest is the brothers' sailing chart, upon which we find the Færoes designated as FRISLANDA, the Shetlands as ESTLANDA and Greenland as ENGRONLANT, or GRONLANDA. The story of Nicolo's visit is accepted by the critics as

entirely authentic. In many details it is corroborated by a description of Greenland from the pen of Ivar Baardsen, written late in the fourteenth century, but which did not find its way into Europe till two hundred years later. Among other surprising things in Nicolo's book, we read that "he found there a monastery and a church, dedicated to St. Thomas (for St. Olaus), close by a hill, which vomits smoke like Vesuvius and Etna.\* Here is found a hot spring, used in heating the church and the friars' dwellings." He further states that the water came into the kitchen hot enough for cooking purposes. It was even used in heating greenhouses, which supplied the monks with an abundance of succulent vegetables and southern fruits. Such statements as the above would never occur to a person fabricating his

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\*To talk about volcanoes in Greenland vomiting smoke and fire like a Vesuvius and an Etna, sounds at first reading as passing strange. But, after all, there is nothing surprising about such a statement. Iceland has for ages been noted for her volcanoes, geysers and hot springs; the whole island is in reality nothing more nor less than one large lava field. We bear in mind how Gunnbjörn's Skerries, lying between Iceland and Greenland were totally destroyed by volcanic action in 1456. Then Greenland in our day is not without thermal waters. One of the most interesting of these groups of hot springs is situated on an island at the mouth of Ounartok Fjord. As far as we know, Greenland has no active volcanoes now; but there is evidence of past activity to a marked degree, in the composition of the soil. A careful exploration of the interior would undoubtedly bring to light extinct craters, their real character hidden by mantles of ice and snow.

story out of whole cloth. For who, never having seen such things, would have thought of placing volcanoes and hot springs in icy Greenland! They certainly add strength to the narrative. With this glimpse of the ÖST BYGD in 1394 we leave Greenland to her decay and oblivion.

More than a hundred years passed away before any serious attempt was made to reach the lost colony. Erik Walkendorf, Archbishop of Throndhjem, first set on foot the project to re-establish communication with Greenland; but as he fell into disfavor at Court and went on a pilgrimage to Rome in 1521 to escape the king's wrath, nothing was for a time accomplished. Seven different kings sent out expeditions, which all for one reason or another failed to gain a foothold on those dreaded shores. So it was reserved for the indomitable Norwegian clergyman and missionary

The Great Mis-  
sionary

Hans Egede in  
Greenland, 1721.

Hans Egede to renew communication with Greenland, and this he did in 1721 after overcoming almost insurmountable obstacles. But the countrymen he sought had forever disappeared, or the last remnant of the Norse blood been absorbed by the Eskimos now in full possession of the shoreline. What he found was ruined farmsteads and villages, churches and monasteries—not a sign of white men anywhere.

Of Erik the Red's family-seat at Brattalid there

remains to our day a cluster of crumbling, roofless stone-houses. Thirty miles or so nearer the coast stands, solemn and imposing in its ruin, what is left of Kakortok church, once the seat of the Gardar bishop. Its bells must have tolled out the years of four centuries before they were silenced forever. Perhaps none other of the ruins is so well preserved. The walls are massive, being all of four feet thick; its length measures fifty-two

The Greenland and a half feet, its breadth, twenty-six. Smaller ruins lie scattered along the coast for miles, being counted on no less than twenty-six fjords in what used to be Öst BYGD and VEST BYGD. Nor can anything bear more striking witness of the life that was lived on those heartless coasts than the gravestones lying in fragments about the decaying churches. At Ikigcit a gravestone was deciphered, bearing this inscription: "Here rests Hroaldr, Kolgrim's son." Another was found in the Igaliko church yard, written in runes, and interpreted: "Vigdis, Magnus' daughter, rests here, may God gladden her soul!" In these places—

"Ruin, the giant, sits; while stern Dismay  
Stalks like some woe-struck man along the desert way."

—But yet, as true guards over the graves of a departed civilization, which endured in space of time as long as all post-Columbian history, counted down to the present; as true guards over the

bones of the hardy Norsemen who first among Europeans dwelt at the portal of the New Continent and were the first to tread its soil!



## The Last of Vinland.

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“‘In the vast forest here,  
Clad in my warlike gear,  
Fell I upon my spear,  
O, death was grateful!

‘Thus, seamed with many scars,  
Bursting those prison bars,  
Up to its native stars  
My soul ascended!  
There from the flowing bowl  
Deep drinks the warrior’s soul,  
SKOAL! to the Northland! SKOAL!”

—HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

The Zeno brothers’ sailing chart is not limited to the lands named above. In it we find marked, at some distance southwest from Iceland and southeast from Greenland, an island called Icaria; at an equal distance beyond this again, and due south from Greenland, the larger island Estotiland; and, finally, at nearly the same distance southwestward from the latter, the far stretching country Drogio.

When Antonio Zeno undertook his voyage of exploration, it was to find a much famed country, lying thousands of miles to the west of the Færoes. A fisherman, cast on those shores by a preverse fate many years before, had just returned home, telling a marvelous tale of adventures by land and



sea.\* The Earl Sinclair was especially taken up with these reports and determined to set out in quest of the lands. Antonio Zeno's Voyage of Discovery, cir. 1400. The experienced seaman Antonio was to hold chief command, and the fisherman, to accompany the expedition in capacity of pilot. The latter unfortunately died on the eve of the departure; but the promoters of the venture, nothing daunted, determined to make the attempt without him. Fog and rough weather harassed them and threw them out of their course; but after driving before the wind for some days, they made land on the western coast of a country called Icaria, possibly a Venetian corruption of Kerry in Ireland, which some writers take it to have been. After leaving this place, they sailed six days west and then four days north by east, arriving at a country which Antonio in his letters claims to have been Greenland. This could hardly have been the case, if we are to rely on his sailing directions; but as a point wholly immaterial to our narrative, it may just as well be passed over without discussion. To make a long story short, Zeno returned to the Færoes without having found trace of the much sought land. But what is of greater interest is the fisherman's tale as recounted by Antonio in one of his letters to Carlo.

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\*Sometime between 1392 and 1406.

"Twenty-six years ago," he writes, "four small fishing craft were driven by storms far out to sea. When the winds abated they found an island, called Estotiland, where one of the craft was washed ashore and the six men comprising her crew taken prisoners by the natives. They were treated with kindness by their captors, who carried them to a large and well built city, where dwelt a people bearing every sign of culture and refinement.\* Gold and the other metals were there in great abundance. They even saw Latin books in the royal library; but which, they add, "no one could any longer read," since there was only one person on the whole island able to understand Latin, and he, an European castaway. This in-

dividual, having found some one Estotiland. among the Færoelanders who was not entirely unacquainted with Latin, became their interpreter. The King invited them to remain in his realm; and not being able to refuse the invitation, they of course acquiesced, and dwelt

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\*John Fiske inclines toward the opinion that the "large, well-built city" was in reality "a large palisaded village, and that the chief had some books in Roman characters, a relic of some castaway, which he kept as a fetish." Dr. Enander is positive the country was one of the colonies established by the Norsemen on the American shore; that the Latin books had belonged to Catholic priests and monks carried off by the Black Death, which he believes claimed its victims in Vinland as well as elsewhere; and that the precious metals mentioned came from the land of the Mexican Montezuma, with whom he is inclined to believe the Norsemen in Estotiland had commercial relations!

there five years before an opportunity for departure was given. The island appeared to be somewhat "smaller than Iceland, but more fertile, and had in its center a high mountain wherefrom flowed four streams that drained the country." There was considerable agriculture; grain is spoken of, and they made from it a kind of "beer." A profitable commerce was carried on with Greenland, wherefrom they imported pitch (possibly whale oil), sulphur and furs.

But where then was Estotiland? In the Zeno chart we find it in nearly the same latitude as Newfoundland, and this has led some writers to guess upon that island. Where they expect to find any points of similitude between Newfoundland and the land of the fisherman's tale is, however, not easy to see. For Estotiland was fertile and drained by four rivers, rising in a mountain at the heart of the country; and then, gold and other metals were abundant. Conditions like these are, everyone of them, foreign to Newfoundland as we know it, and for that matter, if the abundance of metals is to be taken into consideration, of any portion of North America above Mexico. But is

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Now if the Estotilanders really were the descendants of early Norse settlers, they certainly had lost their native language, for let us remember they could not understand a word of what the Færoelanders said to them. But then, that circumstance might possibly be explained away in the four centuries of comparative isolation from home, and by supposed intimate relations with the Indians.

it entirely impossible that Estotiland might have been part of the continent, and not an island at all? And that this story about gold, when taken with a deal of reserve, be explained away. Without wishing to express anything like a definite opinion, I might yet be inclined to connect Estotiland with that portion of New England which early geographers called Norumbega, or Norvega.

Many early cartographers have applied the name Estotiland to the entire region stretching north from the Gulf of St. Lawrence. And Norumbega is variously marked on their charts all the way from Rhode Island to the St. Lawrence, or as including only a small district upon or near the  $43^{\circ}$  north latitude, i. e. on Massachusetts Bay. Now it will

Norumbega not occur to any rational being, or Norvega. even for a single moment, to connect the Estotiland visited by the Norse fishermen with any part of the American coast-line north of the St. Lawrence. For that was the location of Leif's Helluland! To my mind, if Estotiland is to be sought in America at all, we must go farther south. And then why not to Norumbega? To be sure, we find the two marked as separate on a host of old maps; but that is to be expected, being clearly enough the result of projecting a portion of the Zeno chart upon later maps. Not being able to reconcile the two districts to one and the same territory, the cartographers marked them as distinct regions.

One of the most zealous—perhaps too zealous—students of the Norse question in this country is Prof. Eben Norton Horsford. His more than ordinary audacity in this field led to a heated controversy with a number of Massachusetts scholars, drawing from his pen several works of interest on this question,\* displaying at the same time the reluctance with which even great men surrender ancient, faulty views on a subject. In making his defense, he gives a general summary of his work in connection with the Norsemen, which may as well be quoted in full:

“It is I believe, true that I was the first to discover that the landfall of Leif Eriksson was an island once at the north end of Cape Cod, now joined to the mainland, but still existing at the time of Cosa (1500), Ruysch (1507) and Gosnold (1602); the first to trace Leif’s sail across the mouth of Cape Cod Bay and along the coast from the Gurnet, past Cohasset and Nantasket, to Boston Harbor, where he grounded on an ebb tide, and later, with the incoming flood, passed through the entrance of the Boston Back Bay—the HOP of Thorfinn, “a small land-locked bay,—salt at flood tide and fresh at ebb,”—the small lake three leagues around of Verrazano, “the lake through which a river (the Charles) flowed from the land to the sea,” according to Leif,—to the

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\*THE PROBLEM OF THE NORSEMEN, and DEFENCES OF NORUMBEGA.



site of his house at Gerry's Landing in Cambridge; the first to recognize in the sagas the exploration of the Charles River by Thorvald; the first to identify the FURDUSTRAND pursued by Thorfinn around the curve southward from KJALARNES (Cape Cod) to Nauset Harbor, and a few leagues beyond to a second bay; the first to identify the strait against Chatham as the STRAUMFJORD of Thorfinn; the first to identify the extension of the present Monomoy as the STRAUMÖ (Island of Currents) outside of the STRAUMFJORD of Thorfinn; and lastly, to show that his party did not go southward beyond the elbow of Cape Cod. It was also my fortune to discover the great fisheries of Stony Brook, including more than four acres of area, evenly paved with closely and skillfully adjusted bowlders, resting on the expanse of deep vegetable mould at the bottom of the valley; also to find and explore the artificial canals strewn throughout the basin of the Charles; also to discover the site of the ancient city of Norumbega, with its walled docks and wharves, dam, fishway and miles of stone-walls along the Charles below, still in remarkably good preservation, once serving great Norse enterprises, and now more or less in use as underlying or otherwise connected with prominent industries of the historic village of Watertown."

After spending years of painstaking investigation in the field, Prof. Horsford has satisfied him-



self at least, "that Leif landed on Cape Cod in the year 1000 and built his house on the Charles near the Cambridge City Hospital; and that his countrymen and their descendants for centuries conducted extensive industries in the basin of the Charles and elsewhere in New England, of which Norumbega is one of the keys and the monument." At the mouth of Stony Brook, in the very heart of this interesting Ethnological field, there was erected, in 1889, a tower of the old Norse type, bearing a tablet with the following inscription:

.....  
 A. D. 1000. .... A. D. 1889.

# NORUMBEGA.

City. Country. Fort. River.

.....  
 Norumbega = Nor'mbega

Indian Utterance of Norbega. The Ancient Form  
 Of Norvega, Norway, To Which The Region  
 Of Vinland Was Subject.

## CITY

At And Near Watertown

Where Remain To-day

Docks. Wharves. Walls. Dams. Basins.

## COUNTRY

Extending From Rhode Island To The St. Lawrence.

First Seen By Bjarni Herjulfson, 985 A. D.

Landfall Of Leif Erikson On Cape Cod, 1000 A. D.

Norse Canals. Dams. Walls. Pavements.

Forts. Terraced Places Of Assembly Remain To-day.

## FORT.

At Base Of Tower And Region About  
 Was Occupied By The Breton French in the  
 15th, 16th and 17th Centuries.

## RIVER

--The Charles--

Discovered by

LEIF ERIKSON. 1000 A. D.

Explored by

THORVALD, Leif's Brother, 1003 A. D.

Colonized by

THORFINN KARLSEFNI, 1007 A. D.

First Bishop

ERIK GNUPSON, 1121 A. D.

## INDUSTRIES FOR 350 YEARS.

Måsur wood (Burrs). Fish. Furs. Agriculture.

Latest Norse Ship Returned To Iceland in 1347  
 .....

This may be considered a summary of Prof. Horsford's doctrines. The inscription certainly does not leave anything to be desired in the way of confidence; nor can it be denied that the erection of the monument carries with it a certain "air of conscious possession of the field." But how does the learned professor reach such final conclusions? By a system of reasoning along historic lines, aided by cartography, both ingenious and convincing. The following resume of some of the arguments offered may serve to elucidate the methods employed:

1. "There was a region of country in America called Norumbega."—Proven by reports and charts from the hands of Charlevoix, Purchas, Champlain, Haklyt, Thevet, Allefonsce, etc.

2. "There was a city of Norumbega. Numerous maps of the sixteenth and the early part of the seventeenth centuries show it." Descriptions of the city are left by Allefonsce, Thevet, Ramusio, David Ingram, Haklyt, Champlain, etc.

3. It was situated on a river in the forty-third degree." —Authorities: Alle-  
 A Resume of Prof. Hosford's Arguments. fonsce, Thevet, Purchas, Ogilby, Buno's Cluverius.

4. "At the mouth of the river was an archipelago."—Authorities cited: The Vinland sagas, Cosa, Ruysch. Gomez, Lok, Champlain, etc.

5. "At the entrance to the archipelago was a salient of the shape of the human arm, called AIAYASCON by the Iroquois, and NANTASKET by Winthrop and the coast survey. The arm is de-

scribed by Thévet; figured by Chaplain, Lescarbot," etc.

6. The latitude of this arm was determined by Thévet as 42 Deg. 18 Min. The Coast Survey gives it 42 Deg. 14 Min.

7. "Above the archipelago the river flowed through a lake, landlocked, salt at flood-tide and fresh at ebb, figured between Carenas and Cape Breton on the maps of Ortelius (1570), Solis (1598), and Botero (1603). On these maps at the same point above the lake (and on Solis's map, with the cipher indicating a city), on the Rio Grande (the Charles), are the names respectively, Norumbega, Noruega, and Norvega,—all dialectic equivalents of Norway." "This lake was the Hop of Thorfinn and the Boston Back Bay of our day."

8. "Thorfinn records in the sagas before the mouth of the river 'great islands.'" And many other writers mention them.

9. "Roger Clapp passed through the Back Bay in 1630, to within less than a mile of the site of the city of Norumbega, and bartered for fish caught by Indians at the falls on the river above."

10. "Winthrop observed the fall (an abrupt break from still water to rapids). It was occasioned by a dam,—an artificial structure composed of massive field-boulders. It was there when he came. It had been built by a people who had come and gone. Besides the dam, there were docks, wharves, a fishway, and a great extent of stone wall on either side of the river below," etc.

We are to understand, then, that the Watertown ruins were in existence when the Puritans came to Massachusetts Bay in 1628. Further, that they

are not to be traced to the Breton French, who dwelled thereabout for something like two centuries; and that such works were entirely beyond the conception of the native Algonquin tribes. So far Prof. Horsford. But have we any conclusive evidence that these dams, fishways, etc., were not built by the French? To be sure, the "important" city of Norumbega is mentioned by a host of writers; but the term "city" in a new continent is often extremely misleading, being used generally in its relative meaning. Taken all in all, it does not appear to me that the Norumbega hypothesis has yet reached anything like a verification; though it must be owned, the arguments produced in its defense certainly do appear in the light of "straws" blown in a direction to make the existence of Norumbega as a Norse colony a possibility.

But to return to the fisherman's tale: The king of Estotiland, for some reason untold, sent an expedition comprising twelve ships to a country lying far to the south, Drogio by name. Our Færoelanders were selected to pilot the expedition since they, understanding the use of the magnetic needle, were held in high esteem as navigators. After having escaped ruin in a severe hurricane, the weather-tossed sailors were grateful at length to set foot on the shores of Drogio, where, alas! nearly all of them were devoured by the natives, who were cannibals. A few, indeed, were spared be-



cause they knew how to catch fish in nets. One of these fishermen, through a peculiar train of circumstances, drifted from tribe to tribe into the interior of the country, where he saw much and heard more.

This wanderer lived to see his native country after an absence of many years, and there he told his adventures, as before stated, to Antonio Zeno in whose letters he is made to say "that it is a very great country, and, as it were, a new world; the people are very rude and uncultivated, for they all go naked, and suffer cruelly from the cold, nor have they the sense to clothe themselves with the skins of the animals which they take in hunting (a gross exaggeration). They have no kind of metal.

The Fisherman's Description of Drogio. They live by hunting, and carry lances of wood, sharpened at the point. They have bows,

the strings of which are made of beasts' skins. They are very fierce, and have deadly fights among each other, and eat one another's flesh. They have chieftains and certain laws among themselves, but differing in the different tribes. The farther you go southwestwards, however, the more refinement you meet with, because the climate is more temperate, and accordingly there they have cities and temples dedicated to their idols, in which they sacrifice men and afterwards eat them. In



those parts they have some knowledge of gold and silver.”\*

Tired at length of this roving life, our adventurer, more venturesome perhaps than his companions, determined to flee and make his way once more to the coast. In this he succeeded after much toil and hardship. “Here, by good luck, he heard from the natives that some boats had arrived off the coast; and full of hope of being able to carry out his intentions, he went down to the seaside, and to his great delight found that they had come from Estotiland. He forthwith requested them to take him with them, which they did very willingly, and as he knew the language of the country, which none of them could speak, they employed him as their interpreter.”† Thus runs the story of the Norse fisherman in Drogio—a story which, in spite of its startling incidents, bears many “thumb-marks” of truth.‡

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\*Richard Henry Major, *THE VOYAGES OF THE VENETIAN BROTHERS, NICOLÒ AND ANTONIO ZENO, TO THE NORTHERN SEAS IN THE XIVTH CENTURY*, pp 20-21.

†Major, *Id.* p. 22.

‡Says Fiske: “We are reminded that when the younger Nicolo published this narrative, in 1658, some dim knowledge of the North American tribes was beginning to make its way into the minds of the people of Europe. The work of Soto and Cartier, to say nothing of the other explorers, had already been done. May we suppose that Nicolo had thus obtained some idea of North America, and wove it into his reproduction of his ancestors’ letters, for the sake of completeness and point, in somewhat the same uncritical mood as that in which the most worthy ancient historians did not

Now to gather up our fragments: Some Norse fishermen from the Færoes came to Estotiland about the year 1730, where they found a cultured people living in well-built cities. This country is marked by many cartographers to the north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence; but it may in reality have coincided with the province of Norumbega, extending, according to some maps, as far south as Rhode Island. And this latter country (Norumbega) may have been the seat of an extended Norse civilization. The same fishermen later made their way to a large country, Drogio, still farther south, the home of a cannibal people which could hardly have been other than some Algonquin or Maskoki Indian tribes, inhabiting the Atlantic coast from, say, the Chesapeake Bay, southward. These narratives, if verified, would establish two things: First, that the Norsemen had succeeded in founding lasting colonies on the American mainland; second, that Norse fishermen had touched upon the same shores nearly four centuries after Leif Eriksson's day, and about a century prior to

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scruple to invent speeches to put into the mouths of their heroes? Now if the younger Nicolo had been in the mood of adorning his ancestor's narrative by inserting a few picturesque incidents out of his own hearsay knowledge of North America it does not seem likely that he would have known enough to hit so deftly upon one of the peculiarities of the barbaric mind. Here again, we seem to have come upon one of those incidents, inherently probable, but too strange to have been invented, that tend to confirm the story."—THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA, vol. I, pp. 248-252.

the re-discovery by Columbus. As to the Norumbega ruins, we may yet live to see them identified as of Norse origin—nor could anything give the lovers of the discovery question more genuine pleasure than such a solution. Finally, there can hardly be a doubt as to the identification of Drogio with some portion of the Atlantic sea-board.

But, with all the above, it becomes necessary at this point to recollect that our story, as far as Vinland is concerned, since we left the major narratives which ended with Freydis' bloody deed in 1611, has not been entirely free from the elements of hypothesis, some parts of which have not yet been satisfactorily substantiated. I have before warned against overzealous theorizing, so it would behoove me but poorly now to commit the same blunder. This portion of the narrative, therefore, inasmuch as it occasionally beguiles us to dangerous ground, may be left out of the final consideration entirely—*the case is proven without it.*

## A General Summary of the Question.

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"The general reader has been convinced of the fact, which is no longer disputed, that the Northmen were the first modern discoverers of this continent."—AARON GOODRICH.

The settlement of Greenland in 986 has been classed as one of the strange feats of history. So strange, indeed, that many writers would explain its possibility in a change of climate! And, likely enough, would ridicule the possibility of such a settlement altogether, were it not that the colonization of Danish America is as much an historic truth as the settlement of Jamestown in 1607. One people, however, never did see anything strange about the achievement, and that—the Norsemen themselves.

It was very matter of fact to them, inured as they were, from the cradle up, to the rigors of a northern climate. An ice-bound fjord, a dangerous coast, a long, dark polar night might have its terrors for southern mariners, but not so, the Norsemen. But is it so very strange that a people, hardy enough to found a flourishing state on such a barren sub-polar island as Iceland, should be able to find footing on the but little less hospitable Greenland fjords? To me, this appears the most natural thing in the world. For once es-

tablished in Iceland, it would only be a matter of time before they passed their van-guard on to Greenland—be it remembered that Iceland lies hundreds of miles nearer the latter country than Norway. And then, again, when we learn how stout Norse dragons\* plowed their way through the ice of Baffin's Bay, reaching the amazingly high latitude of 75 Deg., does it seem at all strange that other ships should have reached the continent beyond the comparatively narrow Davis Strait? And that, once found, the new landfall, proving pleasant and profitable, should become an object for exploration and colonization? The contrary, rather, would have been strange.

The Icelandic sagas, and particularly Erik the Red's Saga and Thorfinn's Saga, histories of

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\*The ships used by northern sea-rovers were the most seaworthy of mediæval times. Types of their build may yet in our day be seen along the northwest coast of Norway. One of these dragons, unearthed at Gögstad, near Sandefjord, measuring "seventy-seven feet eleven inches at the greatest length, and sixteen feet eleven inches at the greatest width, and from the top of the keel to the gunwale amidships she was five feet nine inches deep. She had twenty ribs, and would draw less than four feet of water." They were built deep of keel, with strong, gracefully curved bow and stern rising high out of the water and usually ending in a dragon's head or similar ornament. The ships were supplied with one tall mast rigged with booms for one square sail; enormous oars, often twenty or more feet long, were used in case of unfavorable winds. Doubting Thomases have in the past given vent to the belief that such open, deckless ships as here described, would hardly have dared venture far from land, to say nothing about crossing the Atlantic. But this talk came to a stop forever



thoroughly established reliability, describe a number of voyages to Vinland on the American coast, between the years 1000 and 1011. We can hardly err in saying that the country described as Vinland lay on the New England coast, in all probability between Cape Ann and Point Judith. Now, as Fiske suggests, the saga of Erik the Red "begins with the colonization of Greenland and goes on with the visits to Vinland. It is unquestionably sound history for the first part; why should it be anything else for the second part? What shall be said of a style of criticism which, dealing with one and the same document, arbitrarily cuts it in two in the middle and calls the first half history and the last half legend?"\* We will agree with Fiske, "quite contrary to common sense."

The celebrated Danish antiquarian Rafn,† as secretary of the Society for Northern Antiquities,

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in 1893, when Captain Magnus Andersen and a hardy crew of modern Norse sailors crossed the Atlantic ocean in just such a ship modelled after the one found at Gögstad. After being exhibited at the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago, the "Viking" was presented to the Field Museum, where it may now be seen.

\*Fiske's Discovery, Vol. I. p. 213.

†Karl Christian Rafn (1796-1864). Full title of his work: *ANTIQUITATES AMERICANÆ, SEU SCRIPTORES SEPTENTRIONALES RERUM ANTE-COLUMBIANARUM IN AMERICA* (Copenhagen, 1873). Since Rafn's time, the best critical discussion we have on the subject is from the pen of Prof. Gustav Storm of the University of Christiana, entitled: "STUDIER



edited, in 1837, a work often cited in these pages, the valuable *ANTIQUitates AMERICANAE*. This marks the beginning of a period of historic research, continued with intermittent interest down to our day. Rafn, unfortunately, overreached himself in his zealous endeavors to point out the exact locality of Vinland, and so became the target for much criticism, mostly undeserved. First to enter the field, his mistakes and faulty conclusions were excusable enough; nor should we let this blind us to the real monumental worth of his work. That he should have mistaken the pictographs on Dighton Rock for Norse runes is not so surprising when we consider their poor state of preservation and the striking likeness of at least some of them to runes and Roman numerals.

It must be acknowledged, to be sure, that too

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OVER VINLANDSREISERNE." This erudite paper may be found in *AARBØGER FOR NORDISK OLDKYNDIGHED OG HISTORIE*, Copenhagen, 1887, pp. 293-372.

Other writers on the subject, in this country, have fallen into the deplorable habit of railing against Columbus and accusing him of all manner of wicked deeds. And such accusations they have attempted to prove by building hypotheses, incapable of verification. The estimable Prof. Rasmus B. Andersen published, in 1874, his *AMERICA NOT DISCOVERED BY COLUMBUS*, a work which created much stir when it first appeared. Could its bitter anti-Columbus spirit have been eliminated, the book would have accomplished a deal more good than it has in its present form. Marie A. Brown (Shipley), following the same line of argument, published, in 1888, her *ICELANDIC DISCOVERERS OF AMERICA*. This volume contains much valuable material; but its galling accusations cannot fail to force protestations from the lips of the fairminded reader.

much eager credulity was displayed in this instance, as also in the attempt to prove the Norse origin of Gov. Arnold's windmill at Newport. Entirely too much good ink has been wasted in attempting to trace the shorelines followed by Leif

and Thorfinn. And with what result? That some zealots have hit upon Mount Hope Bay as the place where the

booths were erected, while others are just as positive that Massachusetts Bay was the place. Numerous attempts have been made to show that the Vinland settlements "must" have existed for centuries after Freydis' bloody farewell. And this in spite of the sagas' absolute silence on the subject! Lastly, there are the numerous attempts to show that Columbus "must" have received knowledge of America from Adam von Bremen's history and from documents contained in Icelandic monasteries, etc.

Such useless guesswork and unreasonable accusations have had the effect of placing the question in anything but an enviable light. As could be expected, the public have long viewed the story of Vinland much as they would a mythological tale—a story with a probable nucleus spun about with a web of the impossible. Some scholars, indeed, have discredited the sagas, in part or as a whole, on the same grounds. This sceptic view has, of course, also kept many from

giving them the careful study required to bring out the whole truth. The only persons who seem to have taken any special interest in the narratives, are such historians who, for reasons of their own, find it necessary to laugh Lief Eriksson to scorn; and these have handled the sagas much the same as an atheist would attack the Holy Bible—with about as much logical reasoning and thorough-going study.

To pause for a moment with the charges against Columbus: This navigator made a voyage to Arctic waters in 1477, and seems to have touched at Iceland. Finn Magnussen\*, originally, and latter Rasmus Andersen† and some other writers, hold that he must have learned something about the existence and whereabouts of Vinland while on the island, and that this knowledge spurred him on to make the voyage to India by sailing westward. Further, that he must have read

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\*Finn Magnussen, NORDISK TIDSSKRIFT FOR OLDKYN-DIGHED, Copenhagen, 1833.

†Prof. Andersen, in the course of his arraignment of Columbus, says that "there were undoubtedly people still living whose grandfathers had crossed the Atlantic, and it would be altogether unreasonable to suppose that he (Columbus), who was constantly studying and talking about geography and navigation, possibly could visit Iceland and not hear anything of the land in the West." And this in the face of the fact that the Vinland voyages were not alone not popular talk in those days, but that they had even faded from the memory of the whole people save a few of the saga students. The discovery of America in 1492 was necessary to again bring the old skius back into the light of day.

Adam von Bremen's *DE SITU DANIÆ*, and that this was the real cause of the Iceland voyage. For could he not expect there to find fuller details of the land where vines and grapes were abundant! Finally, that during the long battle against disappointment, before success came, he was "sufficiently prudent" to breathe never a word to anyone about the guilty secret in his heart. That is to say, he guardedly withheld the one argument which would have given him the immediate support of kings and kingdoms. Surely, he would have found but little trouble in striking the bargain at either the Portuguese or the Spanish Court, could he have "guaranteed beforehand" that "on the west of the great sea of Spain" there lay a great country long centuries before visited by bold northern navigators, and which, without a doubt, formed some part, or lay close to, the

The Ridiculous  
Attacks upon  
Columbus.

Spice Islands! Then a confession of this kind (that he had received hints of the existence of land to the westward) could not have diminished his fame in any material degree. Prof. Storm\* is of the opinion that Columbus never read the appendix to Adam von Bremen's history, and that even in case he had read the book "it would not have been able to show him the way to the West

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\*Gustav Storm, *AARBÖGER FOR NORDISK OLDKYNDIGHED*, 1887, ii. 2, p. 301.

(the Indies), but perhaps to the North Pole."\* It is sure that the appendix was first printed in the Lindenberg edition in 1595, and that during the sixteenth century the manuscript copies of the book was limited to something like half a dozen, none of which seems to have been found south of Vienna. While the limited circulation of Adam's book does not in itself preclude Columbus' knowledge of its contents, the fact certainly does reduce the chances of such a possibility to the minimum. It is questionable whether even the most painstaking examination of the saga literature could have given Columbus anything like a hint in the right direction.†

Sure it is, that in all his behavior, neither by word nor by action, did he ever betray the least knowledge of Vinland. And for this very reason

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\*Precious little encouragement, it seem to me, could Columbus have received from Adam's history in case he had read it. Certainly not enough to warrant undertaking a voyage to Iceland. Why, the author himself was laboring under the gravest misconception as to Vinland's whereabouts! It is therefore difficult to conceive how his description of a country (or island) lying on the border lines to the realm of everlasting ice and snow and darkness could have given Columbus, seeking tropical lands where polar nights are unknown, any hint or clew whatever.

This is what Adam has to say about the regions immediately beyond Vinland: "After this island (meaning Vinland) nothing inhabitable is to be encountered in that ocean, all being covered with unendurable ice and boundless darkness."

†Fiske says: "To suppose that Columbus, even had he got hold of the Saga of Eric the Red and conned it from be-



(sic!) is he branded as the slyest and wiliest among thieves.\* But to be done. The Real Truth. truth in a nutshell is, that neither Columbus nor anyone else in those days dreamed of Vinland as anything more than an outlying country, or island, of Europe. It is only as we come down to the seventeenth century that the truth dawns upon Northern scholars. Then (1606) Arngrim Jonsson first connected Vinland with the new continent, by speaking of it as "an island of America." What can be more significant than this century-long silence of the Scandinavian

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ginning to end, with a learned interpreter at his elbow, could have gained from it a knowledge of the width of the Atlantic Ocean, is simply preposterous. It would be impossible to extract any such knowledge from that document to-day without the aid of our modern maps. The most diligent critical study of all the Icelandic sources of information, with all the resources of modern scholarship, enables us with some confidence to place Vinland somewhere between Cape Breton and Point Judith, that is to say, somewhere between two points distant from each other more than four degrees in latitude and more than eleven degrees in longitude! When we have got thus far, knowing as we do that the coast in question belongs to the same continental system as the West Indies, we can look at our map and pick up our pair of compasses and measure the width of the ocean at the twenty-eighth parallel. But it is not the Mediæval document, but our modern map that guides us to the knowledge."—DISCOVERY, Vol. I, pp. 388 and 389.

\*"The fault we find with Columbus is, that he was not honest and frank enough to tell where and how he had obtained his previous information about the lands which he pretended to discover."—Rasmus B. Anderson, AMERICA NOT DISCOVERED BY COLUMBUS, p. 90.



North! In case Iceland had furnished the necessary information and pointed out the path for Columbus in 1477, surely she would not have been so slow to proclaim to the world after 1492, that the Genoese navigator was trespassing on her right-of-way!

As a Scandinavian and a Norwegian I feel it my duty to put the facts just as they are. Not that this will detract in the least from the true significance of the Norse discovery. It is neither for me to add to nor to detract from Christopher Columbus' achievements. Let them that will, set up an idol and worship him; such can never diminish our hero's fame.

Now that our hands are washed of the Columbus accusations, let us return again for a few moments to the main question. The arguments used in the foregoing pages have been sufficiently complete, I believe, to convince the fair-minded student, that the Norsemen discovered America in the year 1000. And that they made several attempts at colonization between that year and 1010. This much is as firmly established as any event in history. But still, there are those who say that this does not constitute a real discovery. Let us see. Greenland was settled in 986. In speaking of this event Fiske says: "For four hundred years the fortunes of the Greenland colony formed a part, albeit a very humble part, of European history. Geographically speaking, Greenland is reckoned as

part of America, of the western hemisphere, and not of the eastern. The Northmen who settled in Greenland had, therefore, in this sense found their way to America."\* Very well, in the "*geographical sense*," then. "But," he continues, "the story does not end here. Into the world of the red men the voyagers from Iceland did assuredly come, as indeed, after once getting a foothold upon Greenland, they could hardly fail to do."† Shall this be called a discovery in the *legitimate sense*," then? Fiske cannot see it in that light. To him, and many others with him, it does not constitute a discovery "*in any legitimate sense of the phrase*." And the explanation of "*legitimate sense*" seems to lie in the word *result*. Surely no Scandinavian enthusiast has yet

been so bold as to claim that the Norse discovery, in results, was as important as the discovery by Columbus! But what we do claim is, that, *irrespective of results*, the Norse discovery was every bit as much a true discovery as that of Columbus. The latter first touched upon the Bahama Islands. Does this constitute a discovery of America? As much so, though no more so, than the discovery of Greenland 506 years

Irrespective of Results the Norse Discovery Was Every Bit as Much a True Discovery as Was that of Columbus.

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\*Fiske's Discovery, Vol. I, pp. 159 and 162.

†Id. p. 162.

earlier. How would it do to call it also a discovery in the "*geographical sense*?" Fiske would, likely enough, in this instance, call it a discovery both geographically and historically. But we must bear in mind our limitation—"irrespective of results." Later, Columbus beheld the mainland at the mouth of the Orinoco River, in Central America and in Yucatan. How does this answer to the requirements of a discovery in the "*true sense*?" Well enough, it seems to me; but surely no better than does the case of Vinland, 400 years earlier! But the Norsemen did not realize that they had discovered a new continent. Neither did Columbus; he died ignorant of his great achievement. Thus far, all must agree that the case of Columbus is only a parallel to that of Leif Eriksson. And here too, as far as the two discoverers are concerned, the story ends. For at this point they both pass from the stage of activity. Now, because those who came after Columbus used his discovery to better advantage than did the searovers who followed in Leif Eriksson's wake, should this constitute a rationable grounds for deifying the former? While the latter, who in point of character far outshone his rival, is permitted to fall into obscurity! Such treatment rankles the heart of every true Norseman. Nor without cause, for our demand for fair play is indeed reasonable. The whole dispute (and why dispute!) hinges on the question of priority. No sane person ever did

dispute the greater direct influence of the re-discovery by Columbus. But when it comes to priority, to being the first European to find America, etc., we certainly do call a halt. Here we can see but one man in the field, and that is Leif Eriksson.

Leif Eriksson son. All we ask is, that American writers and students return to the truth in interpreting that remarkable ebb and flow of the

human race which is called history. That they rise from their blind worship at the shrine of their one popular hero long enough to do obeisance to another, just as deserving though so long neglected. It has been stated repeatedly that nothing whatever of consequence resulted from the Norse discovery. Here we have it—ever this same purely commercial side—held up to our gaze. Is it absolutely impossible, then, for the American people to understand and appreciate any of a nation's loftier possibilities! Can they not understand, that no mere vaingloriousness, but rather an honest endeavor to claim ties of kinship where they do by nature exist, is the cause of the Scandinavian peoples' demand? When amends for past neglect shall have been made, we all will come to see

consequences enough resultant of the discovery. But some work is necessary—a painstaking study of our own American family tree. It will therein be demonstrated how

The True Light in  
Which to View  
the Norse  
Discovery.

very essential a part in developing the re-discovered country belongs to the Norsemen. It was the great swarms of Scandinavians who settled in the different parts of Great Britain and Ireland, 'engrafting on the population a love for the sea and a skill in seamanship before unknown, together with a daring spirit of enterprise,' that in the fullness of time enabled England 'to solve the problem of closely knitting together lands separated from each other by the Atlantic in all its breadth and vastness.' It was the love for religious and civil freedom, engrafted by them on the population of East Anglia and Northumberland, that determined the great Puritan exodus to America; and so in course of time bore fruit on this continent in the shape of the noblest democracy of all history! This rightly understood, the true significance of the Norse discovery will not be slow to dawn upon us.



## The Discovery Viewed in Its Relations To The Great World Migrations.

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"The overflow of the population of Europe into the different regions of the New World is simply a continuance of the outpourings of the primitive Aryan household into the surrounding countries."—P. V. N. MYERS.

The Northmen comprise one of the great divisions of the Teutonic branch of the Aryan family, whose original home was, it is conjectured, ancient Bactria in Central Asia. Thousands of years ago an extreme pressure of population, coupled perhaps with other economic changes, caused the Aryan Folk to leave their ancient abodes, and seek more hospitable climes. Of these, the clans of the so-called Hindu-Persian branch, after advancing southward for some time, for reasons unknown to us, split up into two different bands, the one pouring down over the table-land of Iran, where they laid the foundations of the future Medo-Persian nation; the other, meanwhile, scaling the lofty Hindu Cush, swept down into the rich valleys of the Indus and Ganges, there becoming the pregenitors of the Hindus.



At the same time, a migration towards the The Aryan west, of greatest consequence to Migration. history, had been initiated by the other Aryan clans. The movement diverged, it would seem, at the Black Sea, one current following its southern shore and pouring into Europe by way of the Hellespont, thence down through the Balkan and Italian peninsulas, laying the foundation to the future glory of Greece and Rome; the other current, after passing northward around the Black Sea, spread, wave upon wave, over Central Europe. First came the Celts, or Kelts, who were shortly crowded into the westernmost parts of the continent by a second wave of their brothers, called Teutons. The modern representatives of the Celts are the Bretons of Bretagne, the Welsh, the Irish and the Highland Scotch. The Teutons, after having urged the weaker Celts as far as they could to the west, settled Central and Northern Europe, where they became known as West Germans, Norse and Goths. Of these, the Goths, who settled along the shores of the Baltic—according to some authorities, peopling all of the southern portion of Sweden—at an early date swept southward, and under the distinct names of Ostro-Goths, Visi-Goths, Lombards, Vandals, etc., overturned the crumbling civilization of the West Roman Empire. The West Germans and the Norse were satisfied to remain where they first set up their abode. On the plains and rivers of

Low Europe they became Germans, Dutch and Flemmings; farther to the north, Danes, Swedes and Norwegians; while in Great Britain they called themselves English.

The Aryan migration, although it commenced thousands of years ago while the history of man was young, has not yet come to an end. There is noticeable, even in our day, a shifting and drifting

The Aryan Migration not yet Ended. of nationalities in many directions, though the main flow is a steady westward one. And the overflow is being dispersed over the whole earth, peopling America and Australia, setting up there and elsewhere, a new and powerful dominion over the aborigines. Wherever they go the Aryans carry with them their enlightenment—their arts and sciences.

European history, since the close of the Middle Ages, has been, in reality, one continuous struggle between the Romance nations which sprang up on the ruins of the Roman Empire, and the two divisions of the Teutons—the West Germans and the Norse. For ages past have they divided Europe into two diametrically opposite camps. And the crest of the mountain axis of Central Europe may be said, in a general way, to be the line of demarkation between them. Two distinct civilizations have been produced. The South, priest-ridden and superstitious, is not able to keep pace with the free, protestant North. The Teu-

tons are winning out. The seat of empire, first established in Greece and on the Tiber, has long been on the Rhine and Thames, and is even now getting ready for a leap across the broad Atlantic. In the New World the struggle has been taken up,

The Teutonic *vs.* the Romance Nations. the dividing line, roughly speaking, lying between the United States and Mexico.

Should this test of comparative qualities continue indefinitely without Slav interference, the weakening Romance nations would speedily yield the crown of victory to the more progressive Teutons. But such would hardly be compatible with existing political alliances and balances, and may be left out of consideration. At any rate, as the situation now is, the Teutonic people, because of the real *true personality* of its members, has set the pace in winning the world to enlightenment. They came from a sterling stock, unrivalled by any other race division; they have a capacity for civilization, and for civilizing, as none other; and their unbounded love for free institutions and their chivalric spirit alone have made possible the growth, within our time, of democracies which, unlike southern republics, are neither bureaucratic nor military in their administration, but representative republican pure and simple.

In this great Teutonic world movement the English-speaking nations easily take the first rank. We may add—in all world movements—for never

did nation in antiquity reach such attainments, nor so marvelously influence the history of all the world. Rome, mighty in decay though she is through the heritage left behind her, would lose her sublimity in contrast, should Old Albion, through some perverse decree of fate, at this moment sink below the entombing Atlantic deep, carrying all her burden of civilization along with her. For her work cannot be outlived, cannot be outgrown. The nations that she fostered and endowed with free institutions now in their strength bespeak the mother's glory; the liberal democratic commonwealths that are even now springing up out of her colonies, shall bear witness, through cycles to come, to the universality of her triumph.

But whence all this strength, all these characteristics which made her the undisputed mistress of the sea, and the establisher of the greatest of maritime empires? The thinker, freed from the bias of a misshapen past, gives the answer: "From its natural fountain-head—*from the Glorious Old North.*" The English people is a product of circumstances. Not the result of an age, but of many ages. Its Celtic progenitors at an early day received a slight infusion of Roman blood, and with it, all the enervating luxuries and vices consequent on Roman modes of life. Then there are the Teutons. The Jutes swarmed over from

the upper part of the Danish Peninsula, the Angles from Schleswig-Holstein, and the Saxons from the German river-mouths. Their conquest of Celtic Britain was complete and no later invader has been able to dispossess them; though later comers have furnished the elements that were required to make English life and character what it now is. The Viking Age began, and in conformity to a great, unchangeable law of nature, the Scandinavian nations poured outward and worldward streams of their best blood. They furnished, as we shall see, the very elements just mentioned above. They, more than the Saxons,\* may claim the progenitorship to the *finished* Englishman. When the Normans crossed the Channel in the eleventh century, it was merely to add to the characteristics already implanted by their brothers, the Danes and the Norwegians.

In the following pages, it shall be our endeavor to point out just what elements of the English national make-up are traceable to the Northmen, and to suggest the influence these have had in

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\*This term Saxon is often used indiscriminately for all the Teutonic invaders. Such a misnomer has effected that Englishmen from sheer force of habit term themselves Saxons or Anglo-Saxons. The truth is, the Saxon element in the English nation has always been over-estimated. Many of the nation's characteristics, by German scholars claimed as Anglo-Saxon, are in reality Scandinavian.



moulding the American Nation. Of all European

The Northern sailors the Northmen were the boldest. As the great Teutonic World migration continued westward Movement across the Atlantic. it was to be expected that its sailor-folk should lead the van; and this the Northmen did. They pushed their beaks into the sea, and were soon at home in England, there converting the land-loving Anglo-Saxons into a nation of sailors. While this reformation was taking place, other Northern bands, unable longer to delay, continued westward and found America in year 1000. This avant-guard was small and too feeble long to hold their find; but the main body in Great Britain at length gave the signal for a general advance. This took place in 1620.

The Norse discovery of America is not to be considered as an accidental happening; but as the first weak pulsation of the great Teutonic trans-oceanic movement, of which the coming of ENGLISH Vikings formed the second and stronger pulsation. In such a light considered, its true significance will readily be apparent to all.



## Scandinavian Elements in Old England.

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"Amongst the many wonders of this world, there is none greater than the blindness of the writers of this and other countries to the transcendent influence of the blood and spirit of ancient Scandinavia on the English character."

—THE HOWITTS.

"It is back to the Northern Vikings we must look for the hardest elements of progress in the United States."

—BENJAMIN LOSSING.

A careful study of place names as they appear on any good map of Great Britain and Ireland would furnish one the necessary key to the districts most thickly settled by the Danes and Norwegians. It would lay bare the fact that a great many names, especially in the north of England, are Scandinavian in termination, and, often, in entire form. In the south of England, where the bulk of the population was of Anglo-Saxon extraction, we meet with place names ending in -ham, -bury, -borough, -ton, -ford, or forth, etc. But once we enter the Thames River districts a gradual change occurs. The above become mixed to a degree with names of Northern origin; and the nearer we approach the Wash, the more numerous these become. There are the names ending in -by (Scandinavian for town), -thorpe (Scan., thorp or torp, a cluster of homes, a hamlet),

—thwaite (Scan., thveit or tved, a detached piece of land), and many others. What is more, not

Danish and Nor- alone are the terminations Scan-  
wegian Place dinavian; but the compound  
Names. words themselves, of which they

form a part, are in most instances traceable to a northern origin and significance. With reference to geographical or natural peculiarities, take for example Haidenby (Scan., Hedeby—heath village), Mickleby (Scan., Magleby—large village), Askwith (Scan., Askved—Ashwood), Stonegarth (Scan., Steengaard—stone farm), Fieldgarth (Scan., Fjeldgaard—mountain farm), etc. Personal names, too, appear very frequently in the make-up of such names. Here could be mentioned, Grimsdale, Thoresby, Asserby, Rollesby, Haconby, Grimsthorpe, and a host of similar ones. Then there are the names of animals, names introduced with Christianity, and names taken from the trades of their first inhabitants; as, for instance: Kirkby (Scan., Kirkeby—churchtown), Derby (Scan., Dyreby—deer town), Copmanthorpe (Scan., Kjöbmandstorp—merchants' hamlet), and the like.

It is difficult in these few pages to give anything like a satisfactory idea of the surprising abundance of Danish-Norwegian place names, in any other way than by some systematically arranged table. The one here included, is the work of that erudite Danish scholar J. J. A. Worsaae, who has

# **Tabular View of Some of the Most Important Danish-Norwegian Names of Places in England.** ('Taken by me from J. J. A. Worsaae, THE DANES AND NORTHMEN.)

Names ending in	-by	-thorpe	-thwaite	-with	-toft	-beck	-ness	-ey	-dale	-force	-fell	-tarn	-haugh	Total.
In Kent, northeast of	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	4	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	6
Walling Street.....	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	11
In Essex.....	.....	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	11
Bedfordshire.....	1	3	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	4
Buckinghamshire...	3	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3
Suffolk.....	5	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	10
Norfolk.....	17	24	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	41
Huntingdonshire.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1
Northamptonshire...	26	23	.....	.....	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	52
Warwickshire.....	2	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3
Leicestershire.....	66	19	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	87
Rutland.....	.....	7	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	8
Lincolnshire.....	212	63	.....	.....	4	8	1	.....	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	292
Nottinghamshire.....	15	20	.....	1	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	36
Derbyshire.....	6	4	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	11
Cheshire.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	6
Yorkshire.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
East Riding.....	35	48	1	6	3	1	1	.....	12	2	.....	.....	.....	109
West Riding.....	32	29	6	8	2	4	.....	.....	12	.....	15	.....	.....	110
North Riding.....	100	18	2	6	1	7	.....	.....	40	4	7	1	.....	186
Lancashire.....	9	.....	14	2	.....	.....	2	2	13	.....	.....	.....	.....	49
Westmorland.....	20	6	14	.....	.....	17	.....	.....	36	6	42	15	.....	188
Cumberland.....	43	1	14	1	.....	12	1	.....	16	1	15	9	.....	142
Durham.....	7	7	43	.....	.....	.....	2	.....	5	2	2	.....	.....	23
Northumberland.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	3	.....	7	.....	10	22
In all.....	604	284	83	24	16	52	15	6	142	15	95	27	10	1373

Besides many other names ending in -holm, -garth, -end, -vig, -ho (how), -rigg, etc., etc.

contributed so much to our knowledge of the monuments and memorials of the Danes and Norwegians in Great Britain and Ireland. Such a table will, as the author declares, "with all its deficiencies, clearly and incontestably prove the correctness of the historical accounts, which state that the new population of Danes and Norwegians that emigrated into England during the Danish expeditions, settled almost exclusively in the districts to the north and west of the Watlinga Stræt, and there chiefly to the west and north of the Wash."\* The table shows that the Northmen have been the strongest near the coast and north

An Explanation of the Humber in old Northumbria of Dr. Worsaae's *berland*. Modern Yorkshire Table.

heads the list with a total of 405 place names; Lincolnshire, lying directly south of the Humber, stands second with a total of 292; while little Westmorland, the home of the Washingtons, is third on the list with a total 158. "The same table further shows that the names ending in *by*, *thorpe*, *beck*, *næs*, and *ey*, appear chiefly in the flat midland counties of England, whereas, farther to the north, in the more mountainous districts, these terminations mostly give place to those in *thwaite*, and more particularly to those in *dale*, *force*, *tarn*, *fell* and *haugh*."† The latter

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\*J. J. A. Worsaae, AN ACCOUNT OF THE DANES AND NORWEGIANS IN ENGLAND, SCOTLAND AND IRELAND London, 1852. p. 72.

†Id. p. 72.

are in most instances of Norwegian derivation and may be met with in the mountain regions of that country in great numbers to this day. Such are, Langdale, Westdale, (Norw., Dal, valley), Highforce, Lowforce (Norw., Fos, a water fall), Mickelfell, Crossfell (Norw. Fjæld or old Norw., Fjäll), Kirkhaugh, Greenhaugh (Norw., Haug, a hill), etc.

At the very juncture of the two strong Norwegian shires of York and Lincoln with Nottingham lie, on the river Idle, Austerfield (Scan., Österfjæld—east of the mountain) and Scrooby (Scan., Skraaby—sloping town). These small towns mark the point from which the Puritan Exodus to

Austerfield and Scrooby Mark the Starting Point from Which the Puritan Exodus Went forth.	America was begun. This significant historic fact becomes the more interesting when we learn as later shown, that these very east counties, together with Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, formed the core of the Commonwealth, and won the victory for Parliament over Charles I. Here again, the ancient Norse love for freedom, political and religious, rescued England from the dangers of unconstitutional rule at the hands of a tyrant king.
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Warm ties of kinship and brotherly feeling have from the earliest time existed between the English and the Scandinavians. Englishmen are usually ready enough to boast of their descent from the Vikings bold They display a degree of interest



and good will for the welfare of the North, such as is not to be met with in the case of an unrelated, alien people. And when in past history the English government, forced by the flow of world politics, has interfered in Northern affairs and levied unjust war, none were louder in their condemnation of the ministry than the English people. Blood-ties are sure to tell, be they ever so weak. It is the case in the present instance; the English are drawn by unseen bonds to the Scandinavians much more than they are, for example, to the Germans and the French. And this is so not

Existing Ties of Good Will be- tween English- men and Scandinavians.	merely on the ground of an existing political antipathy towards the latter nations; but because the Northmen were so fortunate as to infuse the British people with those characteristics which came to the surface more than those furnished from Germany or from France—which were strong enough to place a lasting stamp upon the nation—which made England the carrier of democratic institutions—which made her people, along with the Scandinavians, the sailors of the world.
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If we should make a careful study of the English people's physiognomy—make a journey for that purpose from south to north—we would again meet with infallible marks of the corroboration of historical accounts with the existing truth. In the south of England the people are decidedly



unlike the flaxen-haired Scandinavians. They are rather black of hair, with dark eyes, and clear-cut features; such as would "remind one either of relationship with the Romans, whose chief seat in England was in the south, or rather, perhaps, of a strong compound between the ancient Britons and the Anglo-Saxons and Norman races, which afterwards immigrated into England." As we draw nearer the Wash a remarkable change occurs; the oval face gives way to one more rounded, the nose is flattened somewhat, and the eyes and hair are much lighter. In build, too, the people change; the Yorkshireman is hardly so tall, though more compactly set than his brother farther south.

Mr. Worsaae, in speaking of the people he made such a careful study of, says: "In the midland, and especially in the northern part of England, I saw every moment, and particularly in the rural districts, faces exactly resembling those at home. Had I met the same persons in Denmark or Norway, it would never have entered my mind that they were foreigners. Now and then I also met with some whose sharper features reminded me of the inhabitants of South Jutland, or Sleswick, and particularly of Angeln; districts of Denmark which first sent colonists to England. I adduce it only as a striking fact, which will not escape the attention of at least any observant Scandinavian trav-

eller, that the inhabitants of the north of England bear, on the whole, more than those of any other part of that country, an unmistakeable personal resemblance of the Danes and Norwegians."\*

But if the Northmen of a truth did leave such indelible marks upon the physiognomy of so large a percent of the English people, could one not, with some reason, expect to find other traces of their influence as well? Most assuredly. While, in the main, as was generally the case wherever they went, the Vikings were ready to give up their speech for the veracular of those they found in control of the soil, so powerful was their influence that many words were adopted by the English, and are to the present time found in our standard language. Skeats, in his ETYMOLOGICAL DICTIONARY, gives a list of over five hundred such words. These do not indeed compare in number with the Latin or French element; but, as Mr. Emerson declares, "from no other foreign source have we received so large a portion of simple, every-day words, as from the language of the Danish invaders.†

The Danish-Norwegian Element in English. Again, so near akin was their language with English, that it is impossible now to determine, with anything like exactness, how

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\*Worsaae, THE DANES AND NORTHMEN, pp. 79—80.

†Oliver Farrar Emerson, THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, p. 156.

great the Danish-Norwegian element really was. But this will never be denied, that, where the origin of a word was in doubt, English and German philologists have never tumbled over one another in their haste to accredit it to the Scandinavians. Indeed is the Danish-Norwegian element large in the class of words daily on our tongues. And so powerful, that 'not only nouns, adjectives and verbs were borrowed, but even pronominal forms, as they, their, and possibly them.' Among the commonest of Danish-Norwegian words, descended to us from the Old English period, are *call, crave, fellow, haven, husband, hustings, knife, law, take* and *wrong*.\* This much for the Standard English as we know it.

Were we, on the other hand, to wander into the remote mountain regions in the north of England, say into the fastnesses of Yorkshire, Westmorland, Cumberland or Lancashire, we should find there

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\*Says Emerson: "Many common Teutonic words in English which have an SK combination of sounds are of Norse origin. Examples are SCALD, SCARE, SKILL, SKIN, SKY, SCORE, BASK, BUSK. Such words if English in origin, would now have SH instead of SK. On the other hand, some French words and a few of low German origin also have the sound combination SK, as SCAPE, SCAN, SCARCE, SKIPPER. Similarly Norse words have G, K, as in gun, kid, instead of Y, CH, the corresponding English sounds. Examples are GIFT, GET, GUEST, DRAG, EGG, FLAG, HUG, LEG, LOG, and KEG, KID, KILT, KIRTLE. Of Norse origin also are many words with AI, EI, as BAIT, HAIL, "GREET," SAID, RAISE, SWAIN, THEY, THEIR, WAIL."—A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, p. 98.

still a vernacular full of terms almost unintelligible to the modern Englishman, though not at all strange-sounding to Scandinavians.\* Our space is too brief in this paper to discuss at greater length this interesting subject. Below is appended, however, a list of words taken from the provincial English, which will clearly enough illustrate the remarkable influence of Norse upon the popular dialect.

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\*Dr. Worsaae, who spent some time among these quaint mountain folk, gives some exceedingly interesting illustrations of this vernacular. He says: "On entering the house there one will find the housewife sitting with her ROCK (Dan., ROK; Eng., distaff) and SPOELE (Dan., SPOLE; Eng., spool, a small wheel in the spindle); or else she has set both her ROCK and her GARNWINDLE (Dan., GARNVINDE; Eng., reel, or yarn winder) aside whilst standing by her BACK-BOARD (Dan., BAGEBORD; Eng., baking board) she is about to knead DOUGH (Dan., DEIG), in order to make the oaten bread commonly used in these parts, at times also barleybread; for CLAP-BREAD (Dan., KLAPPEBRÖD, or thin cakes beaten out with the hand) she lays the DOUGH on the CLAP-BOARD (Dan., KLAPPEBORD). One will also find the BOARD CLAITH spread (Dan., BORD-KLÆDE, Eng., table cloth); the people of the house then sit on the BANK or BINK; (Dan., BÆNK; Eng., bench), and eat AANDORN (English afternoon's repast, or, as called in Jutland and Funen, ONDEN, dinner). The chimney, LOVVER, stands in the room; which name may be connected with the Scandinavian LYRE] Icelandic LJORI; viz., the smokehole in the roof of thatch (THACK), out of which in olden times, before the houses had regular chimneys and lofts" (Dan., LOFT; Eng., roof and upper room), the smoke (REEK REIK Dan., RÖG,) left the dark (MIRK or MÖRK, Dan., MÖRK) room. Within is the bower or BUR (Eng., bed chamber), in Danish, BUUR; as for instance in the old Danish word JOMFRUBUUR (the maiden's chamber), and in the modern word FADEBUUR (the pantry)."—THE DANES AND NORSEMEN, pp. 81-82.

# A Short List of Words Taken from the Provincial English, with Danish Equivalents.

(Extracted from Worsaae, DANES AND NORTHMEN.)

ENGLISH.	PROVINCIAL ENGLISH.	DANISH.
scar	arr	Ar
spider	attercop	Edderkop
to beat	bank	banke
child	bairn,* bearn	Barn
to pray	bede	bede
to stay	bide	bie
to mix	blend	blande
to quarrel, grasp	clammer	klamres, fast- klamre
to climb	claver	klavre
to knead	elt	ælte
earnest-money	festing-penny	Festepenge
from	fra	fra
strangers	frem folks	Fremmede Folk
merriment	gammon	Gammen
hedge	gar	gar [Norw.] Gjerde
to weep, tears	greit, greets	grede, Graad
towel	hand clout	Haandklæde
hayrack	heck	Hække [til Hø]
buttermilk	kern-milk	Kjernemelk
to tuck up	kilt	kilte [op]
to catch	nab	nappe
pot-sherd	pot-scar	Potteskaar
hand-mill	quern	Quærn
toasted	reasty	ristet
shirt	serk	Særk
to cry, shriek	skrike	skrige
hiding-place	smooth-hole	Smuthul
sea-weed	tang	Tang
empty	toom	tom
disorderly, filthy	unrid	uredt, urede
homespun woolen	wadmal, woadmel	Vadmél
ache, pain	wark	Værk
a field.	wong, vaenge	Vænge

\*A few of these words are also found in the Scotch.



According to Worsaae, it was not at all uncommon formerly at least, to find many old Norse names, such as Thorkil, Erik, Harald, Else and many others, in North England. But of more importance are the surnames ending in *son* or *sen* (Scan., Sön—a son). This ending is distinctively Norse, being unknown in early English, whose corresponding patronymic suffix is *ing*, as in *Hastings*, *Steyning*, *Gillingham*, and *Nottingham*. Names of this kind are Adamson, Benson, Gibson, Jackson, Johnson, Nelson, Thomson,

Scandinavian Stevenson, etc. They are now encountered in every quarter of the globe; but in each instance where they are traceable to the Scandinavian North, or to Middle and Northern England, Scotland, and the Teuton Irish, they may be safely set down as of Norse origin. It is interesting to sit down and in one's mind run over the long list of prominent names ending in *son*. In England and America it includes great sailors and soldiers, statesmen and presidents. Highest on the scroll of fame among English naval heroes, we read the name of Admiral Horatio Nelson. His name is undeniably Scandinavian (Scan., Neilsen); his birthplace is the old Norse settlement Burnham Thorpe, Norfolk; better still, his family tree points to his Northern descent, and his deeds affirm it. The bloodiest and most stubbornly fought action of Nelson's



whole career was the battle of Copenhagen Roads, the second of April, 1801. There  
 The Case of Ad- finally, the great seacock met  
 miral Horatio his equals. It was a case of  
 Nelson. Dane fight Dane, with honors evenly divided; "for the battle was neither won by the English nor lost by the Danes." The Nelson type of men, in whose veins the blood of generations of Vikings coursed, were the men that made England all powerful on the sea.

The early Celtic inhabitants of England were but indifferent sailors. Their ships were small and unseaworthy, and they appear never to have undertaken any extended voyages. When the Romans invaded the island, the Britons were utterly unable to cope with them on the water; and yet, the Romans had never been particularly at home on the treacherous deep! The Saxons, on the river-mouths of Germany, were no better off. As mentioned above (page 9), they could not even use ships successfully to hinder Charlemagne in crossing the Rhine and the Elbe.

In England, where they mixed with the Jutes, the conditions were much better, and seafaring and commerce held a position of some importance. At length the Viking deluge broke on English shores and the transformation, destined to make England great, was begun. These sea-rovers built the first really seaworthy ships on record. Nations of antiquity had acquired a greater or

lesser degree of skill in seacraft in proportion as the geographical position of their shorelines permitted; and the Phœnecians even held the proud distinction of being the first to circumnavigate the continent of Africa. But for all that their galleys were built for alongshore carrying-trade and for sailing on inland waters rather than to endure the storm and tempest of the open ocean. Not so the dragons in which the Vikings sailed. They were large and strong, well suited for furrowing the broad Atlantic.

The Northmen laid the foundation of 'modern navigation, by extending commercial intercourse to a degree before unknown; and by thus uniting parts of the globe which were previously separated, they in a manner changed the face of the whole world.' When they swept down upon England, the Anglo-Saxon inhabitants there could offer but little resistance. We read of King Alfred building fleets—which, by the way, he was forced to man, in part at least, with Frisians—in the vain hope to cope with the invaders. The islands were conquered, the new nation imbued with an unbounded love for the sea, and in a few short generations England had taken her place at the head of the maritime powers. This Norse leaven worked that now,—

"Brittania needs no bulwarks,  
No towers along the steep.  
Her march is o'er the mountain wave  
Her home is on the deep."

The sea-rovers who scoured the sea with Hawkins, Drake and Raleigh, and whose chief delight it was to chase the Spaniard from his Main, and burn his shipping in the Great King's own ports, were Vikings of the blood descended. When in 1588 the INVINCIBLE ARMADA appeared in the Channel, England's only safety lay in her "wooden walls." And the battling spirits who on that eventful day so skillfully outsailed and outfought the Spaniard, and thereby determined that Protestantism and freedom, and not Popery and despotism, should rule the half of Europe and the whole of future America, were—ENGLISH Vikings.

We have had occasion earlier in these pages to make mention of the influence upon England of Danish law. This is the time to dwell a little more in full upon that subject. In the Old North every freeman was "lord of his own castle." The household, including kin, retainers and thralls, must needs abide by his will. In his home-district, he voiced his will at the THING and cast his vote in the manner he deemed best. At the GENERAL THING of the kingdom, where all freemen, great and small, would assemble, he chose his king or dethroned him, as the case might be. There he voted war and peace, made treaties with the neighboring small-kings, settled disputes, made national laws, etc.

He loved dearly these institutions of freedom and wherever he went into the world he took

them with him. He might to a degree give up the tongue he spoke, but his laws and free institutions,

Norse Law in never! The beginning of the  
England. tenth century marks the introduction of Norse, or Danish, laws into England. At that time, the Scandinavian settlers in East Anglia, and of the coast lying to the northward, concluded a treaty with their English neighbors which placed the two nations on an equal legal footing, by providing for the punishment of crime and the payment of fines, each nationality according to its own laws.\* A decade or two later, King Edgar granted further important law privileges to the Danes who by that time had forced their way into the very heart of England.†

By degrees Danish law supplanted the Anglo-Saxon code in the whole of the country north of Watlinga-Stræt—the so-called Danelag, i. e. “Danes-law.” When the Danish king Knud the Great seized the throne he encouraged its introduction to other sections of England as well. Af-

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\*Thus the English were to pay “WITE,” or fines, according to the English law, in pounds and shillings; while the Danes were to make compensation for “LAH-SLIT” [i. e. INFRACTION OF THE LAW, from the old Norsk LÖG, law, and -SLITA, to rend in two, break], according to the Danish law in “marks” and “ores.”—Worsaae, pp. 156-157.

†“Then will I that with the Danes such good laws stand as they may best choose, and as I have ever permitted to them, and will permit so long as life shall last me, for their fidelity, which they have ever shown me.”—Edgar’s LAWS, ch. 12.

ter the Conquest William the Conqueror "commanded that these laws should be in force throughout the kingdom and consequently even in the purely Anglo-Saxon districts, as both his own forefathers and those of almost all his barons, had been Northmen, who had formerly emigrated from Norway."\*

In the north of England the newcomers divided the country into *THING*-districts precisely the same way as in Scandinavia. Memorials from those times may be seen in such names as Thingwall in Cheshire and Tingwall in the Shetlands and in the Isle of Man (Scan., Thingvoll, or Thingvold—the Thing mound). The towns too had their *THINGS*, where municipal laws—the *By-Love* (Eng., town-laws, from which is derived our modern word by-laws)—were enacted.

In the days of Henry I (1100–1135) England was divided into three general law circuits, each with a system peculiarly its own. They were, Wessex, Mercia, and the Danelag.† This might appear to contradict what is said of William the Conqueror in relation to the Danish law; but the truth is, that in the fourth year of his reign that monarch

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\*Worsaae, p. 166.

†In the II Henry, paragraph I, we read: "Regnum Anglie trifarium dividitur in regno Britannie, in Westsexiam, et Mircenos, et Danorum provinciam." And further, in paragraph 2: "Legis eciam Anglice trina est particio, ad superiorum modum; alia enime Westsexie, alia Mircena, alia Danelaga est."

was persuaded to reinstate Edward the Confessor's laws wherever the people preferred them to the new system. Nevertheless, the laws of Wessex and Mercia had by the beginning of the twelfth century become so colored by the influence of the Danish law, that numerous judicial terms and words of Scandinavian origin could never be eradicated. In course of time the Great English Common Law was moulded, embodying all the important law customs and usages that had been in vogue in the different judicial circuits. And a careful, impartial analysis of that famous codex illustrates beyond a shadow of doubt the very extraordinary influence of Scandinavian laws upon England. As an instance, may be taken the institution of the jury system.

This system has for centuries been a powerful agent in preserving popular freedom in England, and is today as potent an agent in the commonwealths that have sprung from her. Much has

The Norse Origin of the Jury System. been written variously explaining its introduction to England.

A few students assert that it is of Anglo-Saxon origin, ascribing its introduction to the great King Alfred. Another class, and this more numerous, maintains that the Anglo-Saxons knew absolutely nothing about trial by jury that its original home was Scandinavia, whence it was carried by Rolf Ganger to Normandy, and from the latter country came to England as one



of the fruits of the Norman Conquest. Yet others aver that it was introduced direct from the North; that it came as an inevitable result of the Danish Invasion. And to none other than to the old Scandinavians should the honor be ascribed. We might argue, with some effect, that if the Normans were able to introduce trial by jury to sections of France, and later carry it with them to England, was it not to be expected that their brothers who invaded England in much greater numbers, coming in continuous streams for several centuries, should have accomplished as much as they? As a matter of fact, we have very definite proofs of the existence of jury trial before the Norman Conquest,\* *and this existence of it in the Danelag*, while it was yet entirely unknown in the Saxon districts. The adherents of the Anglo-Saxon theory of origin have long been in the habit of pointing to a certain passage in King Ethelred's

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\*Says Worsaae, in speaking of the question: "It must now be regarded as a point quite decided that the earliest positive traces of a jury in England appear in the Danelag, among the Danes established there, and that long before William the Conqueror's time, they had brought over from their old home the Scandinavian NÆVN, or jury, into the districts northeast of Watlinga-Stræt, colonized by them, just as their kinsmen and brothers introduced that powerful safeguard of popular freedom into Iceland and Normandy. It would, indeed, have been quite inexplicable that the Danes should have given up their peculiar Scandinavian NÆVN in a country like England, where the Danish law obtained by degrees so extensive a footing that, during the reign of the first Norman kings, it was still in force in one-half of the kingdom."—pp. 164-165.

laws by way of proving their assertions. But this last peg seems now to have been so effectually knocked from under their hobby, by the learned English editor of those laws, Mr. Thorpe, that there can no longer be any room for argument. The particular passage so oft-quoted (found in Ethelred III. § 3 and 13; and Ordinance governing the Dun-Setas, § 3) ordains "that every Wapentake shall have its THING; that a 'Gemot' be held in every Wapentake, and the XII. senior Thanes go out, and the reeve with them, and swear on the relic that is given to them in hand, that they will accuse no innocent man, nor conceal any guilty one."—"And let doom stand where Thanes are of one voice; if they disagree let that stand which VIII of them say; and let those who are outvoted pay each of them, VI half marks."—"XII lahten shall explain the law to the Wealas and the English, VI English, and VI Wealas. Let them forfeit all they possess if they explain it wrongly; or clear themselves that they knew no better." Says Worsaae: "A highly remarkable circumstance has been too much overlooked, namely, that Ethelred's above-mentioned regulation as to the composition of the jury is contained *only* in the law just cited; which according to its latest English editor was intended only for the five Burghs and the surrounding Danish districts." Again, "that it cannot have been intended for the Anglo-Saxon part of England may be immediate-

ly seen from the circumstance that all the fines mentioned in it are, without exception, fixed according to the Danish custom in *marks* and *ores*, and not, after the Anglo-Saxon custom, in pounds and shillings."\* The twelve *lahmen* (Old Norse, *lögmandr*; Dan., *Lagmænd*), as mentioned in this law, are conceded to have been of Norse origin. It is worthy of notice that the old English Domesday-Book mentions *lahmen* only in Danish England. What is more, states that the *lahmen* were always Thanes or men of equally high rank. The text of the law, lastly, makes use of a great many judicial terms of Scandinavian origin. There are such as, "*thrinna XII*," (Dan., *trende Tylvter Eed*)—i. e. three times twelve oaths); "*lahcop*," (Old Norse, *lögkaup*); etc. etc.†

Both Scotland and Ireland received their share of the swarming Northmen, here mostly Norwegians; and, like England, their modern population carry not a little infusion of Norse blood. Caithness, comprising the northeast portion of Scotland, was for ages a Norwegian earldom; and the western coast and the outlying islands there,

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\*Worsaae, pp. 163-164.

†It is absolutely impossible in this brief exposition to do the subject TRIAL BY JURY the justice which its importance rightly demands. Nowhere, it seem to me, have we a better nor a more interesting treatment of it, than in J. J. A. Worsaae, *THE DANES AND THE NORTHMEN*, pp. 151-179.

were strongly peopled by the Norwegians. The

The Northmen sea lying between Great Britain in Scotland and Ireland was, practically Ireland.

speaking, a Norwegian lake, girth about by settlements, which were especially strong in Ireland, where they for ages held undisputed sway over much of the eastern and southern coasts. There are families in the ancient city of Dublin, where a Norwegian dynasty of kings reigned uninterruptedly from 855 until about 1200, who to this day claim descent in direct line from these early lords of the coast. If one should run across an Irishman bearing the name of Anderson or some such similar surname ending in *-son*, he may immediately be singled out as of Scandinavian extraction. We have, however, no space for a lengthy digression upon these nationalities. But, before leaving the present discussion of the *Scandinavian Elements in Old England* for good, a few words in exposition of the remarkable old-time civilization yet traceable in the Isle of Man, seem not altogether out of place.

This Manx stronghold lies about midway between Cumberland and Ireland. While the Gælic tongue has entirely supplanted the Norse once spoken there, the island's present inhabitants yet retain their old Scandinavian heritage of customs and laws so nearly perfect as to make them our best model of the ancient plan of the North. A passing survey of the island's geography is suf-

ficient to prove the Scandinavian origin of its many place names. There are Snæfell (Norw., Sneefjeld—snow-mountain), the highest mountain on the island, and, as seen by tracing the coastline, beginning at the southeast point and moving west and north, Lang Naze (Langnes), Dalby, Iurby (Ivarby) Point, Ayr Point, Ramsey, Sulby, Laxey (Laxaa), Derby Haven, etc.

That the Norsemen were at one time absolute in the island many things bespeak. The assertions of the sagas are here entirely superfluous. Geographical and other monuments are so numerous on Man that it might almost be mistaken for a bit of Iceland or some corner of Norway. Thirty-nine grave monuments in the shape of stone crosses, generally bearing runic inscriptions, have been found near the old stone kirks, chiefly in the the northern section. Many of the inscriptions have been deciphered as simple Norse epitaphs. At Kirk Bradan, one reads: "Thurlabr Neaki risti krus thana aft Fiaks—bruthur sun Jabrs" ("Thorlaf Neaki erected this cross to Fiak—brother, a son of Jabr"); or at Kirk Andreas: "Sandulf ein suarti raisti krus thana aftir Arin Biaurg kuinu sina" ("Sandulf the Swarthy erected this cross to Arnbjörg, his wife.") These and numerous other monumental inscriptions of a similar nature contribute in a high degree to strengthen the chronicled

The Isle of Man—  
Its Place Names,  
Runes, THING-  
hill, etc.

accounts that a purely Norwegian civilization flourished here for hundreds of years. But this is of the past.

Something, however, of enduring influence and utility remains over—*the old Norse constitution and the ancient custom of holding annual Things*. And these, strange as it may sound, are held “on the identical Thing-hill, Tynwald, from which, about a thousand years ago, the Norwegians governed the Sudreyar.” (the South Islands). When the Isle of Man fell under English rule Parliament allowed it to retain its ancient law-customs. Under existing conditions, while this law-making body enacts laws for every other part of the Kingdom, they are of no validity whatsoever in the island, should they happen to be out of accord with the ancient, existing law! Here appears an interesting example of “home rule.” The organization of the government is strikingly similar to that of the Norwegian earldoms which were found in those waters at an early date. It acknowledges the supreme authority of the English sovereign, as in days of yore, the King of Norway. A governor assisted by a council of nine comprise the upper house, and in a manner correspond to the Norwegian jarl and his advisers. The lower house, or “house of keys,” consists of twenty-six members, holding life membership, and with influence as great as had any Norwegian Thane. Tynwald Hill, which stands in a



beautiful vale on the west coast, marks the last Thing-place existing of all set up by the Scandinavians abroad. It lies there a beautiful green mound, rising in terraces, four in all, the top one with a circumference of about 200 feet. From this summit the old jarls of the "South Islands" were accustomed to make their annual proclamations. Now, yearly, on St. John the Baptist's day, these proclamations are made by the governor, who, upon that day, declares all the bills passed by the "three estates" of the island to be good "Tynwald Acts," or laws. Thus, the Norwegians may be said to have disappeared from the Isle of Man; but that love of freedom and that political superiority which marked them as unlike other men remain and have a lasting monument in—Tynwald Hill.

To recapitulate: The Danes and Norwegians, who settled in Great Britain and Ireland, came in

A Re-capitu- such numbers as to materially  
lation. influence the future existence of the English people. This they accomplished partly by developing trade and fostering a love for the sea and for navigation; partly by weakening the Anglo-Saxon hold upon the country, thus preparing for the advent of their brothers, the Normans; and partly by upholding certain inherited free civil and political institutions, which in time became bulwarks against tyrant kings and their creatures, laying the cornerstone to English and, later, to American free institutions.

## Scandinavian Elements in the United States.

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The eastern counties of England, from the Thames northward, have been remarkable in history as the British *litus haereticum*. No other section of the country could boast such a vigorous growth of Puritan heresy; none, such a readiness for strife at threatened freedom's call. The struggle between Parliament and King was in reality a test of strength between East England and West England. And the victories at Naseby and Marston Moor were won by men from the old Norse shires of York, Lincoln and Norfolk, the Norse-Anglican shires of Suffolk and Essex, with Cambridge, Huntingdon and a few others. The Puritan

The Importance  
of the Eastern  
Counties in the  
Puritan Revolution;  
the Part They Played in  
the Puritan Ex-  
odus.

Revolution has been termed "the most critical struggle in all history." Had it failed, civilization would have received a setback of most serious consequences, not alone to England and America but the whole world. "Had it not been for the Puritans," declares an eminent American historian, "political liberty would probably have disappeared from the world." In this connection the Danish conquest of England is seen in one of

its most interesting and important faces. For, as reiterated time and again above, the Scandinavian counties along the eastern coast were the back-bone and main-stay of the entire movement. And when, in fulness of time, the all important exodus to America began, these selfsame counties not alone initiated the migration, but they poured forth one continuous stream of well-born men and women, who settled Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay.

The year 1604 marks the beginning of the struggle between James Stuart and the non-conformists. About that time, at a conference of leading Puritan clergymen, the king exclaimed, "I will make them conform, or I will harry them out of the land." The former, no tyrant Stuart could ever do; as to the latter threat, here he succeeded—but little as he dreamed it—to the betterment of the whole world. At the old Norse village of Scrooby the conflict was begun. There William Brewster, the government postmaster, took up the dangerous fight in behalf of Puritanism. He was materially aided in all his undertakings by the non-church Puritan minister John Robinson, a worthy of good Scandinavian ancestry, who later became the famous Pilgrim pastor. A notable third party to this conflict was William Bradford from old Austerfield in Scandinavian Yorkshire; he was destined to become the virtual father of the Pilgrim colony in North America. With

the help of these men Brewster organized the first independent, or "separatist," congregation in England. This was in 1606. So bitterly did the king persecute the daring heretics, that, following Robinson's advice, they fled to Leyden, Holland, which they reached in 1609.

It is of no use here to repeat the story of the Mayflower voyage. This much only would I call attention to; namely, that out of  
 The Sailing of the Mayflower, 1620. the hundred odd men and women on board the Pilgrim carrier, a great many must have been of Scandinavian descent, for did they not come from the heart of the Old Norse settlements! As much may be said of the passengers of the Fortune, 1521, and of the Anne and the Little James, 1623; they, likewise, were chiefly from the same region. It has been truly said that no mere accident gave the name of Boston to the present metropolis of Massachusetts, nor named near-lying counties by such names as Norfolk, Suffolk, etc. It is of significance, too, that many New England personal names of historic prominence are of a purely Norse origin and can be traced to the Scandinavian section of England. Among these are such well-known names as Wenlock Christison, Francis Higginson, Anne Hutchinson, Alexander Johnson, Abraham Pierson, William Robinson, Marmaduke Stevenson and others.

A hopeless task would it be now to seek out the actual influence exerted by Norse blood in laying the foundations to our great American Commonwealth. Suffice it to say, that it must have been extremely great. Thus we see the importance of the Danish invasion of England viewed in a new light. For by throwing forward, across the sea, a secondary migratory wave, it played a part in preparing the North American soil and people for Freedom's call.

This influence is national therefore. Thanks are due to the Norsemen for many of our most important civil and political institutions. For New England more than Virginia shaped the course to be followed by the American people. But even Virginia could boast some good Norse blood. Take for instance the family-tree of George Washington, the foremost personage produced by this free American soil. The uncertainty long existing in

The Probable  
Scandinavian  
Origin of  
George Washington.  
regard to the English progeni-  
tors of the Washington Family,  
which led to numberless and  
fruitless controversies among  
genealogists, was practically cleared up by the  
publication, in 1879, of *The Pedigree and History of the Washington Family*, by Albert Wells, *President of the American College for Genealogical Registry and Heraldry*. This eminent scholar's position enabled him to obtain what without a doubt is the correct pedigree.

His correspondent, a lineal descendant of the English progenitor, who spent thirty years in gathering evidence for his work, writes: "If I had not taken upon myself the great labor of examining those inestimable records, the 'Common Pleas Rolls,' the truth of that great man's lineage would not have been revealed. They are of immense value, and I hope you will make them known to your countrymen by the publication of a Washington History. The pedigree I now send I can establish by legal evidence."

The Family-tree, as recorded in Welles' book has its root away back in Danish History. It originates, in fact, with an early 'Royal Line of Denmark and is traced through thirty-two generations to Thorfinn the Dane, who settled in Yorkshire long before the Norman Conquest.' "The descent is traced in Denmark and England, from father to son, down through the centuries, including branches in different shires, to John Washington, the great grandfather of George Washington in twenty generations from Thorfinn; with interesting personal matter regarding nearly 500 members of the family and their alliances in England and America." George Washington, a Dane! This certainly must sound strange to many of our American countrymen; and especially to those who never think of tracing their own family history farther back than to some English shire or village. Here, what a field of hidden



possibilities lies ready for exploration.\* Let the American people make a careful study of their pedigrees and marvelous will be the results! Yes, establish beyond a doubt that many of the nation's greatest men had their origin in that old fountain head—the Scandinavian North.

The great Teutonic migration is still going on. With other peoples, the Scandinavians are yet today doing their share of changing the national complexion of the United States. At an early day, in obedience to a mandate of the immortal Gustavus Adolphus, the Swedes first turned their faces toward America. Since 1638 a continuous stream of Norwegians, Swedes and Danes have flocked to our western shores. The tide of immigration hardly as yet shows any indication of abatement. Thus, beginning with the Viking Age centuries

Modern Nor-	ago, the North has poured its
men in the	best blood in ceaseless streams
United States.	westward into the world, to

better the world. The scum of a people is not in the habit of immigrating. In the case of the Scandinavians only the great middle class of working people have gone out; for the Northern governments have generally been careful to keep their pauper and criminal classes at home, and the upper classes, with few exceptions, are too well

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\*For a complete discussion of this interesting subject see Albert Welles, *THE PEDIGREE AND HISTORY OF THE WASHINGTON FAMILY*, New York, 1879.

contented to think of leaving. In 1900 there were in the United States about 3,500,000 Scandinavians. This is counting the immigrated parents and their first American-born generation. While found in every state in the Union, they are especially numerous in the great Northwest, including the states of Wisconsin, Minnesota, the two Dakotas, Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska. They are, upon the whole, a conservative class, inclined somewhat toward clannishness. But they are honest and progressive, making the very best citizens. Coming, as they do, from the most literate countries of Europe, they cannot but exert a very great elevating influence in the states where they settle.

Like the New Englanders of old, their faith in school and church is unbounded. Institutions of Scandinavian-learning, as good as the best in Americans as the land, spring up where they Citizens, settle, and their church-spires point heavenward in every settlement. It is our proud boast that the Scandinavians in the United States have a better record when it comes to moral depravity, than any other nationality represented. In 1890 1 out of 1,999 persons in this country was a criminal; 1 out of 860 Irish; 1 out of 1,103 English; 1 out of 2,013 American; 1 out of 2,715 German; and 1 out of 5,933 Scandinavian.\*

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\*See O. N. Nelson, HISTORY OF THE SCANDINAVIANS AND SUCCESSFUL SCANDINAVIANS IN THE UNITED STATES, Minneapolis, 19.0.

This certainly speaks well for the latter as law-abiding and as disinclined to viciousness. Used to a great measure of self-government at home they take kindly to our democratic form of government, are early naturalized, and take an active interest in politics. They fill offices of trust and honor, both state and national; and it may be said that no more scrupulous and honorable men have served as chief executives in their home states or as members of the national house or senate than the Scandinavian-Americans.

Colonel Hans Mattson, in his *Story of an Emigrant*, makes use of the following language, which is worthy of repetition in full: "It is very true that the Scandinavian immigrants, from the early colonies of 1638 to the present time, have furnished strong hands, clear heads, and loyal hearts to the Republic. They have caused the wilderness to blossom like a rose; they have planted schools and churches on the hills and in the valleys; they have honestly and ably administered the affairs of town, county and state; they have helped to make wise laws for their respective commonwealths and in the halls of congress; they have with honor and ability represented their adopted country abroad; they have sanctified the American soil with their blood, shed in freedom's cause on the battlefields of the revolutionary and civil wars; and though proud of their

Scandinavian ancestry, they love America and American institutions as deeply and as truly as the descendants of the Pilgrims, the starry emblem of liberty meaning as much to them as to any other citizen.”\*

The modern Norse immigration to the United States must by us be viewed as a continuation of that important movement initiated so long ago. In this wise interpreted, the Norse discovery of America ceases to be accidental, and of no consequence, and is seen to conform to certain laws of humanity as natural as any governing the movements of the planets in their course around the sun. The true significance of the discovery of America, it seems to me, lies in this that the Northmen were fate's chosen agents in preparing

To sum up Our western Europe for the passage Arguments. of the hitherto unsurpassable ocean, by inculcating in those people a love for the very element they formerly held in such abject fear; in this that they were strong enough and virtuous enough to put that distinguishing stamp upon England which has made her what she is, and which subsequently decided the course for the United States to follow; in this that they not alone were the pioneers on the American coast and that

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\*Colonel Hans Mattson, THE STORY OF AN IMMIGRANT, St. Paul, 1890.

they prepared the way, but that the great movement which ended in the establishment, on the new continent, of a nation "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal," can be explained wholly and solely in the fortunate blending of the early English and men from the Scandinavian North.

— FINIS. —



















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