

months. We know that they must have been highly cultivated, and even learned, for the period in which they lived ; for of that fact they have left us ample proof. Their demeanour towards Harald Haarfagr in itself shows that they were an essentially high spirited and independent class ; and the records which they and their descendants have left behind them, show that they were exceedingly proud—not only personally haughty, but proud of their families, of their ancestors, and of their race. No people—not even the Jews, or any other race—have given so much study to genealogy and to family history, and have so carefully kept, continued, and preserved their genealogical records, as these Norsemen. We have proof of this propensity in a branch of the race other than the Icelandic—to wit, the *Norman*, specially so called. The propensity—perhaps it may be said the *passion*—of those of the original Norman stock, or having Norman blood, for tracing back their ancestry through all its connections, to its earliest known source, is sufficiently notorious. And, by-the-bye, their example has, in these our days, led the credulous imagination, or unscrupulous invention, of many vain people to the construction of family pedigrees of a very mythical character.

The Norseman, in becoming an Icelandic, lost nothing of the dauntless bravery which had made him the dread of Europe. His occupation as a Viking was indeed gone. He would not, in Norway, condescend to abandon that pleasant and profitable pastime, at Harald Haarfagr's bidding. Now, in Iceland, he abandoned it of his own accord, his good intention, however, being much aided by circumstances under which he found himself placed. Norway, then as now, abounded in timber suited to ship-building. There the Viking and his company could easily build and fit out their ships ; and, on putting out to sea, the propinquity of their Norwegian home

to more fertile and wealthier shores, afforded a fair prospect of easy success in their piratical forays. With Iceland for their home, the case was very different. There, growing timber was scarce, and that little was of but stunted growth. The Icelanders were under the necessity of procuring their larger vessels—their *long ships*, as they were called—from Norway. Hence it was only the more wealthy of their number who could afford such possessions. Again, their new home was far removed from all of those shores which had long been the Vikings' paradise. But the Norse daring and love of adventure, still, were the most prominent characteristics of the Icelanders, as was also his love of the sea for its own sake. From all this, it turned out eventually that the Icelanders, having ceased to be Vikings, became almost equally noted as roving merchant adventurers ; and, as such, they visited almost every clime and country of which they had any knowledge. In this respect they, for centuries after the colonization of Iceland, unquestionably outshone all other nations.

The Icelandic at home, during this same period, became, in like manner, pre-eminent among his contemporaries for his rapid progress in intellectual culture. Even if he possessed luxurious tastes and appetites, which is doubtful, the necessities of his position forbade him to indulge them. His own little tillage land, his pastures, and his abundant fisheries, supplied all his immediate wants. At the same time, the labours which they imposed upon him were far from engrossing all his time and attention. There were, especially in that high latitude, the long winter evenings of leisure to be disposed of. Men of the Viking blood—men of a race who had for ages been engaged in the fiercest of national wars, or the most daring of piratical adventures—must, when once they had cut themselves off from their former pursuits, have found themselves with an immense amount of surplus energy on