

Bishop of Kerry, in the South of Ireland, sailing across the Atlantic and discovering an Island of the Blessed, and the Atlantis of Plato, were but the traditional embodiment of a fact. Columbus visited Iceland to seek there among the traditions of the natives some clue to the mystery of the Ocean. We know not what encouragement he may have received there, to persevere in his almost hopeless enterprise, but modern research has proved that the traditions were not without foundation. The Society of modern antiquaries has done much to clear away the mist which obscures this most interesting portion of history. Professor Rafn has collected and translated very many of the songs of the Scalds, or Scandinavian poets, recounting the voyages of their countrymen to the Western land; many of them have been translated into English by Mr. Beamanish, of Cork, and are most interesting to all early historians of America. We know for certain that about the year 981 or 982 Eric, called the Red, a Norwegian Viking, discovered Greenland, and that a Bishop's See was established in that inhospitable region about the year 1021. A list of the Bishops of that remote See has been preserved down to 1408, nearly 400 years, when all communication between it and the Mother Country ceased, and the imperfect civilization introduced perished. A few ruins of walls, of stone fences now mark the site of the Norwegian colony. It is quite natural to suppose that those adventurous mariners who crossed over to Iceland and Greenland so frequently, would not content themselves without passing the few hundred miles which separated them from the Western Continent, only about 500 from the Western seaboard of Greenland. Accordingly we find accounts of voyages to, and settlements in Helluland, Vinland, Markland, and Ireland; it Mikla—Helluland is supposed to be the barren and stony coast of Labrador, Vinland or Winland Newfoundland; but then as we have no wild vines, many learned men transfer the name to some more Southern land in the present United States, while others again say that the Northmen looked on the abundance of the raspberry plant, as entitling the country to the name of Vinland. Markland is supposed to be Nova Scotia or Main, and Ireland it Mikla or great Ireland, the main Continent of America, the present United States. It is very improbable that so many accounts of the voyages would be preserved, the names of the discoverers and navigators, the birth of some of their children recorded, the wreck of one of their ships on Keeler Ness, Kell Cape or Ship Cape, and the locality marked out, now Keels in Bonavista Bay, by the certain but rude way of determining the Northern Latitude, that is the length of the longest day in the summer solstice, if it were all a work of ima-