

more or less successful. All his days, by such methods as there were, he kept pressing forward with this great enterprise, and on the whole did thoroughly shake asunder the old edifice of heathendom, and fairly introduce some foundation for the new and better rule of faith and life among his people.

DISCOVERY OF AMERICA.

Towards the end of this Hakon's (Jarl Hakon) reign it was that the discovery of America took place (985). Actual discovery, it appears, by Eric the Red, an Icelander; concerning which there has been abundant investigation and discussion in our time. *Ginnungagap* (Roaring Abyss) is thought to be the mouth of Behring's Strait in Baffin's Bay; *Big Hellowland*, the coast from Cape Walsingham to near Newfoundland; *Little Hellowland*, Newfoundland itself. *Markland* was Lower Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. Southward thence to Chesapeake Bay was called *Wine Land* (wild grapes still grow in Rhode Island, and more luxuriantly further south). *White Man's Land*, called also *Great Ireland*, is supposed to mean the two Carolinas, down to the Southern Cape of Florida. In Dahlmann's opinion, the Irish themselves might even pretend to have probably been the first discoverers of America; they had evidently got to Iceland itself before the Norse exiles found it out. It appears to be certain that, from the end of the tenth century to the early part of the fourteenth, there was a dim knowledge of those distant shores extant in the Norse mind, and even some straggling series of visits thither by roving Norsemen; though, as only danger, difficulty, and no profit resulted, the visits ceased, and the whole matter sank into oblivion, and, but for the Icelandic talent of writing in the long winter nights, would never have been heard of by posterity at all.

THE KING'S PALACE.

The new King Olaf, his brother Magnus having soon died, bore rule in Norway for some five-and-twenty years. Rule soft and gentle, not like his father's, and inclining rather to improvement in the arts and elegancies than to anything severe or dangerously laborious. A slim-built, witty-talking, popular, and pretty man, with uncommonly bright eyes, and hair like floss silk; they called him Olaf *Kyrre* (the Tranquil or Easy-going).

The ceremonials of the palace were much improved by him. Palace still continued to be built of huge logs pyramidally sloping upwards, with fire-place in the middle of the floor, and no egress for smoke or ingress for light except right over head, which in bad weather you could shut or all but shut, with a lid. Lid originally made of mere opaque board, but changed latterly into a light frame, covered (*glazed*, so to speak) with entrails of animals, clarified into something of pellucidity. All this Olaf, I hope, further perfected, as he did the placing of the court ladies, court officials, and

the like; but I doubt if the luxury of a glass window were ever known to him, or a cup to drink from that was not made of metal or iron.

THE IRISH HAARFAGR.

Magnus Barefoot left three sons, all kings at once, reigning peaceably together. But to us, at present, the only noteworthy one of them was Sigurd; who, finding nothing special to do at home, left his brothers to manage for him, and went off on a far voyage, which has rendered him distinguishable in the crowd. Voyage through the Strait of Gibraltar, on to Jerusalem, thence to Constantinople; and so home through Russia, shining with such renown as filled all Norway for the time being. A king called Sigurd Jorsalafarer (*Jerusalemmer*), or Sigurd the Crusader, henceforth. His voyage had been only partially of the Viking type; in general it was of the Royal-Progress kind rather; Vikingism only intervening in cases of incivility or the like. His reception in the Courts of Portugal, Spain, Sicily, Italy, had been honorable and sumptuous. The King of Jerusalem broke out into utmost splendor and effusion at sight of such a pilgrim; and Constantinople did its highest honors to such a Prince of Væringers. And the truth is Sigurd intrinsically was a wise, able, and prudent man; who, surviving both his brothers, reigned a good while alone in a solid and successful way. He shows features of an original, independent, thinking man; something of ruggedly strong, sincere, and honest, with peculiarities that are amiable and even pathetic in the character and temperament of him; as certainly the course of life he took was of his own choosing, and peculiar enough. He happens furthermore to be, what he least of all could have chosen or expected, the last of the Haarfagr genealogy that had any success, or much deserved any, in this world. The last of the Haarfags, or as good as the last! So that, singular to say, it is in reality for one thing only that Sigurd, after all his crusadings and wonderful adventures, is memorable to us here: the advent of an Irish gentleman called 'Gylle Krist' (Gilchrist, Servant of Christ), who,—not over welcome, I should think, but (unconsciously) big with the above result,—appeared in Norway while King Sigurd was supreme. Let us explain a little.

This Gylle Krist, the unconsciously fatal individual, who 'spoke Norse imperfectly,' declared himself to be the natural son of whilom Magnus Barefoot; born to him there while engaged in that unfortunate 'Conquest of Ireland.' "Here is my mother come with me," said Gilchrist, "who declares my real baptismal name to have been Harald, given me by that great king; and who will carry the red-hot ploughshares or do any reasonable ordeal in testimony of these facts. I am King Sigurd's veritable half-brother; what will King Sigurd think it fair to do with me?" Sigurd clearly seems to have believed the man to be speaking truth; and, indeed, nobody to have doubted but he was. Sigurd said "Honorable sustenance