

embodying the concession of their independence was drawn up in such haughty terms as to resemble rather the offer of an alliance, than the renunciation of imperial rights. On the amalgamation of the three Scandinavian monarchies, at the union of Calmar, the allegiance of the people of Iceland was passively transferred to the Danes. Ever since then Danish pro-consuls have administered the government, and Danish restrictions have regulated the Icelandic trade. The printing press was introduced as early as 1530, and many works of merit have from time to time been printed, the fruit of Icelandic genius. Shakspeare, Milton, Pope and Byron (the latter of the same name and lineage as the first voyager to America in the year 1000), and other British poets have been translated into the native tongue. One of the best printed newspapers [wrote Lord Dufferin in 1856] which he had ever seen was printed at Reykyathik, and the colleges of Copenhagen are adorned by many illustrious scholars from Iceland. The same competent authority tells that the men of the island to this day are in their manners and education, gentlemen; the women, in high intelligence and social refinement, ladies. Besides their native Icelandic tongue which is the purest remnant of Scandinavian, many speak English and French fluently, and nearly all can write and converse in Latin.

But it is a debate in the session of Parliament held in Thingvalla in the year 1000, that the historical student of to day is asked to recal out of the profound past. The subject under discussion in the warm July of that year, under the open sky of the bright blue heavens, was one never surpassed in solemnity in any hall of legislation, and the majesty of the argument and keenness of repartee were equal

to the best encounters of sharp intellects in later times. A report of the debate has been preserved. The question was that of adopting as the state religion of Iceland, the new theology, Christianity; brought from Norway by King Olaf's missionaries. When the leading missionary, Thangabrand, had spoken, the legislative debate began. Long, eloquent, fierce and prophetic were the opposing orations. The immovable pagan party foretold ruin to the island. The party advocating Christian baptism and who worshiped the God of the Christians, urged their arguments both theologically and politically. As one of them was speaking an earthquake shook Thingvalla, while an explosion of thunder reverberated from rock to rock, filling every legislator, missionary and auditor with momentary tremor. 'Listen,' cried the leading orator of the pagan party, 'how angry is Odin that we should even make the new religion a subject of debate. His fires will consume us!' Quickly, the leader of the new party exclaimed, pointing to the mountain precipices of lava around them; 'with whom were the gods angry when those rocks were melted, when that chasm was rifted open by earthquake and fire?' Taking advantage of that hit and of the disturbed assembly, a division was called, and the votes for the adoption of the Christian theology and ritual, as expounded by Thangabrand, greatly preponderated.

And now we may follow the voyagers to the great western continent and islands, remarking that it was when King Ethelred the Unready ruled in England; that it was fifteen years after Hugh Capet had succeeded the last Carolingian on the throne of France; and about fifty years before Macbeth and his wife murdered King Duncan, in Scotland.