

lands, and spread itself over the northern shore of France. It was a movement which continued for several years. The first arrival was that of a chieftain named Ingolf, who eventually settled himself upon the spot where the town of Reykjavik, the little capital of Iceland, now stands. To this spot he believes himself to have been directed by the will of his tutelary divinities; which will was ascertained in this way. These pagan Norsemen were accustomed to having set up in front of the residences of their chiefs what they called *Seat-posts* (*Setatokkar*). These were, in each case, a pair of large and lofty beams of timber, elaborately carved and surmounted by figures of Odin, Thor, Friga, or whoever were assumed to be the tutelary deities of him who thus set them up. Upon a change of residence, these *Seat-posts* were carefully removed and embarked, with other probably less-valued chattels, on ship-board, the sea being, of course, almost the invariable means of local communication. On arrival in the vicinity of the intended new home, the *Seat-posts* were thrown overboard, and the point on shore to which they drifted became their owner's new seat, or place of residence. The reader may be curious to know what would be the result in the not at all improbable event of two men's *Seat-posts* being washed ashore at the same place. In that case, we must suppose that the first arrival would secure the land, and that the new comer would try again elsewhere; or that, if they arrived simultaneously, and were on particularly friendly terms, and nearly equals in power and wealth, they would effect an amicable arrangement; or that if one was weak and the other strong, the weakling would judiciously find some good reason for betaking himself elsewhere, notwithstanding the previous dictation of his gods. If otherwise, we may rely upon it that, as a matter of course, the stronger man just killed the weaker one, without any needless ado, and

thus settled the business at once. These old Norsemen had ever a prompt and simple way of arriving at results.

It is a singular fact that, at this very day, there are certain tribes of Indians in British Columbia, on the northern coast of the Pacific, who have *Seat-posts* set up in front of their wigwams, and have had them from time immemorial. These posts are often so elaborately carved that, considering the tools employed, the work expended upon one of them must have cost several years of the native artist's life. It would be an interesting investigation, that of tracing to its origin and primeval meaning, this rare custom, now practised by a few of the Aborigines of the North-West coast of America, and which *seems to be* identical with a custom, or religious usage of the Norsemen of Europe, a thousand years or more in the past.

The pioneer, Ingolf, was rapidly followed to Iceland by others of his fellow countrymen. The navigation continued for about sixty years—until, indeed, King Harald, fearing that his kingdom was about to become depopulated, laid such an embargo upon the exodus of his subjects that it became difficult for them to get out of Norway—at all events, when going in the direction of Iceland.

Our task is not, however, to submit to the reader a political history of Iceland. Yet it becomes necessary for us to say a few words as to the character and habits of these Norse Icelanders and their descendants. These emigrants, who had proved so refractory under Harald Haarfagr's iron rule, consisted of men who must have belonged to the highest class of the magnates of Norway, together with their families and servants. They must have been very wealthy, even to have owned the shipping which sufficed to convey their several households and retinues, with all their cattle and other effects, over a voyage which may have lasted, and probably did last, for several