

When indeed we recall what the rude Norse galley of Eric the Red must have been, and what the little "Pinta" and the "Niña" of Columbus—the latter with a crew of only twenty-four men,—actually were; and remember, moreover, that the pole star was the sole compass of the earlier explorer: there seems nothing improbable in the assumption that the more ancient voyagers from the Mediterranean who claimed to have circumnavigated Africa, and were familiar with the islands of the Atlantic, may have found their way to the great continent which lay beyond. Vague intimations, derived seemingly from Egypt, encouraged the belief in a submerged island or continent, once the seat of arts and learning, afar on the Atlantic main. The most definite narrative of this vanished continent is that recorded in the *Timæus* of Plato, on the authority of an account which Solon is affirmed to have received from an Egyptian priest. According to the latter, the temple-records of the Nile preserved the traditions of times reaching back far beyond the infantile fables of the Greeks. Yet even these preserved some memory of deluges and convulsions by which the earth had been revolutionized. In one of those the vast island of Atlantis—a continent larger than Lybia and Asia conjoined,—had been ingulphed in the ocean which bears its name. This ocean-world of fancy or tradition, Plato revived as the seat of his imaginary commonwealth; and it had not long become a world of fact when Sir Thomas More made it anew the seat of his famous Utopia, the exemplar of "the best state and form of a public weale." "Unfortunately," as the author quaintly puts it, "neither we remembered to enquire of Raphael, the companion of Amerike Vespuce on his third voyage, nor he to tell us in what part of the new world Utopia is situate;" and so there is no reason

why we should not locate the seat of this perfect commonwealth within our own young Dominion, so soon as we shall have merited it by the attainment of such utopian perfectibility in our polity.

But it is not less curious to note the tardiness with which, after the discovery of the New World had been placed beyond question, its true significance was comprehended even by men of culture, and abreast of the general knowledge of their time. Peter Giles, indeed, citizen of Antwerp, and assumed confidant of "Master More," writes with well-simulated grief to the Right Honorable Counsellor Hierome Buslyde: "As touching the situation of the island, that is to say in what part of the world Utopia standeth, the ignorance and lack whereof not a little troubleth and grieveth Master More;" but as he had allowed the opportunity of ascertaining this important fact to slip by: so the like uncertainty long after mystified all current ideas of the new-found world. Ere the "flowers of the forest" had been weeded away on Fiodden Hill, the philosophers and poets at the liberal Court of James IV. of Scotland had learned in some vague way of the recent discovery; and so the Scottish poet Dunbar, reflecting on the king's promise of a benefice still unfulfilled, hints, in his poem "Of the World's Instabilitie," that, even had it come "fra Calicut and the new found Isle" that lies beyond "the great sea-ocean, it might have comen in shorter while." Upwards of twenty years had passed since the return of the great discoverer from his adventurous voyage, but the *Novus Orbis* then and long afterwards continued to be an insubstantial fancy; for nearly another twenty years had elapsed, when Sir David Lindsay, in his "Dreme," represented Dame Remembrance as his guide and instructor in all heavenly and earthly