

impassable barriers of ice, which cut off all intercourse with them subsequent to the close of the fourteenth century, and the very existence of the long lost region became a matter of doubt.

From time to time, however the subject was revived. Many a Norse legend and poem celebrated the charms of the Hesperian region which was fabled to lie embattled within the impassable Arctic barriers, clothed in the luxuriant verdure of a perpetual spring. In Iceland, where the old Norse colonists had maintained their ground, the faith in the ancient Greenland colonies remained unshaken; and received confirmation from various indications of the lost settlement, as well as from the definite traditions current among the Islanders, and narrated in their Sagas.

Among older memorials of Greenland and the mythic Vinland, it is recorded that towards the middle of the seventeenth century, an oar was drifted on the coast of Iceland bearing this inscription in runic characters: *OFT VAR EK DASA DUR EK DRO THICK.* *Oft was I weary when I drew thee.* To this the poet, James Montgomery, refers in the fourth canto of his *Greenland*, when following the later route of the Moravian Brethren in their generous exile:—

“Here, while in peace the weary pilgrims rest,  
Turn we our voyage from the new-found west,  
Sail up the current of departed time,  
And seek along its banks that vanished clime,  
By ancient Scalds in Runic verse renowned,  
Now like old Babylon no longer found.  
“*Oft was I weary when I toiled at thee;*”  
This on an oar abandoned to the sea  
Some hand had graven. From what foundered boat  
It fell; how long on ocean’s waves afloat;  
Who marked it with that melancholy line:  
No record tells. Greenland, such fate was thine:  
Whate’er thou wast, of thee remains no more  
Than a brief legend on a foundling oar;  
And he whose song would now revive thy fame,  
Grasps but the shadow of a mighty name.”

Repeated unsuccessful attempts had been made by Norwegian, Danish, and English voyagers, at the time this poem was published, to effect a passage through the icy barriers around the east coast of Greenland; and it was not till 1822 that the enterprise of the distinguished Arctic voyager, Captain Scoresby, was rewarded with success.