

tellectual character of those who have gone into the business. On this side of the Atlantic it has suffered much from the same causes; but especially has it suffered from the unrestrained licence of American publishing houses in reprinting stolen literary property. Buccaneers may be an exhilarating, and possibly a profitable, calling, but it can hardly be termed a moral one. The ethical influence of literary piracy on the book trade of America would be a subject for curious enquiry. Not the least of its evil effects is to be seen in the shrivelling up of native literature, and in the degeneracy of the modern publishing firms, who from preying upon British authors have descended to preying upon one another. Another harmful result is the lowering of public taste in the mechanical artistry of bookmaking and the relegation of much of the business of the trade—a consequence of overproduction and the vicious cheapening of books—to shop-girls in mammoth bazaars, to ignorant street pedlars, and the itinerant auctioneer. Second-hand bookselling in the Old World is a princely occupation compared with the business done in the “plugs” (“remainders,” and unsaleable stock) of the American book-trade and the slop that finds its way to the slaughter-house of the Book-junker. The character of the trade in such hands, with not a little that finds sale in the way of “dime novels” and vile illustrated weeklies, not only suffers deterioration but degrades bookselling from its high estate. Happily, however, the bulk of the issues of our publishing houses are not of this class. Not only are they eminently clean and wholesome, but their publishers enjoy the high repute of having been intimately associated with the best literary activities of the age. In the record of service literature has been to the century what has been accomplished and what has been made possible in the work of booksellers and publishers the discerning literary historian will not fail to note. Younger men coming up to the management of the book-houses of the time may well take pride in the history and traditions of the trade, regard bookselling as a profession, and find emulation in the career of those who have laboured to maintain its honour and advance its fame.

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### THE NORSE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA.

—In the year 1000 the continent of America was discovered by the Norsemen, who gave to it the name of Vinland the Good. The narrative of the different voyages thither is preserved in two separate versions: one emanating from the north of Iceland, the other from the west. Both accounts correspond in essential points, but are different in many of their details; and each has apparently been derived, independently of the other, from oral tradition, which, for several centuries before they were written down, was the means of transmitting them from generation to generation. The northern version is preserved in the Flatey-book, a manuscript written between 1387 and 1395, a century before the discovery of America by Columbus. The western version is contained in two manuscripts, which are even older. The Hauks-book, written in the first half of the fourteenth century, and a manuscript of about the same age, Number 557 in the University Library at Copenhagen. The western version is in every way the better; in

detail it is particularly rich, and introduces episodes entirely lacking in the ruder version of the north. Among these incidental narratives one is especially interesting, both from its subject and from the vividness with which its principal character is drawn: it is the story of Thorwall, the earliest American poet.

The first discoverer of America according to the western version of the Saga, and the real discoverer according to both, was Leif, the son of Eirik the Red. Eirik was a Norwegian, who went to Iceland with his father when the latter had been banished for homicide. In the year 982, having, in his turn, been exiled for three years for the same offence, Eirik went from Iceland to Greenland, where he remained during the period of his banishment. When this had expired he returned to Iceland, but, having induced others to join him, he again went to Greenland, where he settled at a place called Brattahlid. From Greenland Leif, in 998, made a voyage to Norway. The date is distinctly given in the Flatey-book, which says, “When sixteen winters had passed from the time that Eirik the Red went to Greenland, then went Leif, the son of Eirik, out from Greenland to Norway.” Upon his arrival in Norway, Leif went immediately to the court of the Norwegian king, Olaf Tryggvason, and met with a cordial reception. He returned that same year to Greenland, but the following year he went again and remained during the winter. In the spring of 1000, after consenting, in accordance with the desire of the king, to undertake the introduction of Christianity into Greenland, he set sail from Norway. He met, however, with extremely rough weather, and for a long time was driven before the wind and lost his bearings. He finally found himself in sight of a coast which he did not recognize. Wheat was growing wild; there were grape-vines in plenty, and maple-trees. He brought away with him specimens of these; among them pieces of maple wood so large that they were afterward used in house-building. Leif reached Greenland in safety, and spread abroad the news of his discovery. A year or two later an expedition was organized to rediscover the country found by Leif. It consisted of one ship, with a crew of twenty men, commanded by Thorsteinn, the brother of Leif; but stormy weather was encountered, and, after drifting here and there, they were glad to put back to Greenland, without having accomplished their object. Several years went by before another attempt was made. In the autumn of 1006 two trading ships came from Iceland, each with a crew of forty men: the one commanded by Karlsefni and Snorri, and the other by two brothers, Bjarni and Thorhall, all Icelanders. Eirik the Red entertained the crews of both ships during the winter, and in the succeeding spring it was decided to undertake again an expedition to Vinland. In addition to the two Icelandic vessels a third, commanded by Thorvald, a son-in-law of Eirik, was fitted out, and, with one hundred and sixty men all told, they set sail together in the summer. Many of the men were accompanied by their wives, and that it was their intention to form a permanent settlement is seen from the fact that cattle were also taken. Two days out from Bjarney (an unknown island to the west of Greenland), with a north wind, they found a coast covered with large flat stones. To this land, evidently some part of the Labrador coast, the