

tings in these trees were made by axes wielded by the descendants of Northmen. For I find that the Icelandic MSS. speak of breast-plates worn by the Northmen; and as to their axes, it is stated that the natives tried them on wood, and afterwards on stone; but the instruments used by the former to cut down maple trees, could not withstand the use made of them, by the latter, upon stone. If it be asked what has become of the Northmen, and where are their descendants, we answer: Like the mighty master builders of the splendid cities of Central America, of Mexico, and of the rude mounds of Ohio, they have passed into the shades of oblivion.

There have been discovered, beyond lat. 60°, in Greenland, upward of 500 people resembling those in the north of Europe, probably descendants of the Northmen.

An important inquiry arises: Was Columbus aware of the discoveries by the Northmen?

From a letter preserved by his son, it appears that he visited Iceland in 1477. And it is thought by some that he *there* obtained a knowledge of the discovery of Vinland. Allowing this to be the case, it is singular he should never have given any intimation of such knowledge.

Instead of *walking* through Spain, leading his son by the hand, would he not at once have rushed into the presence of the sovereigns and acquired patronage, wealth, and honor, by telling them that the obscure Icelanders had discovered the region he wished to unfold?

His greatest enemies never accused him of having reached the New World, by information received from Iceland.

But, as Columbus was rather artful, he might, from particular motives, have concealed this knowledge from the observation of mankind.

After all, let not the circumstance of this prior discovery, cause, in our view, the laurels given to Columbus, to wither on his brow. Let us ever honor him for his perseverance and his virtues.

Let not Leif and his associate Northmen deprive him of what the voice of nations has awarded, the merit of having given, not to Ferdinand and Isabella only, but to successive generations, a new world.

Iceland, though but a speck on the bosom of the Northern ocean, is not unworthy our notice. Though dark to the superficial observer, yet it shines with a lustre brighter than the flame rising from its volcano. It is the light of knowledge. That obscure island is remarkable for the attention paid to learning. Every man among the common class, pursue the higher branches of study. Their long nights are enlivened by the custom of *every* member of the family gathering around the bright lamp, while one reads for the amusement and instruction of all.

The sources of happiness are not, like those of mighty rivers, hid from the view of most people. They are accessible to all. The Icelanders, living in a remote island, and cut off from privileges that milder climates present, are naturally led to look for happiness in the pursuit of knowledge.