

the Old and the New World prior to the fifteenth century, passed from the region of speculation to the domain of historical fact, when the publication of the *Antiquitates Americanæ* and the *Grönland's Historiske Mindesmærker*, by the antiquaries of Copenhagen, adduced contemporary authorities, and indisputably genuine runic inscriptions, in proof of the visits of the Northmen to Greenland and the mainland of North America, before the close of the tenth century.

The idea of pre-Columbian intercourse between Europe and America, is thus no novelty. What we have anew to consider is: whether, in its wider aspect, it is more consistent with probability than the revived notion of a continent engulfed in the Atlantic Ocean? The earliest students of American antiquities turned to Phœnicia, Egypt, or other old-world centres of early civilisation, for the source of Mexican, Peruvian, and Central American art or letters; and, indeed, so long as the unity of the human race remained unquestioned, some theory of a common source for the races of the Old and the New World was inevitable. The idea, therefore, that the new world which Columbus revealed, was none other than the long-lost Atlantis, is one that has probably suggested itself independently to many minds. References to America have, in like manner, been sought for in obscure allusions of Herodotus, Seneca, Pliny, and other classical writers, to islands or continents in the ocean which extended beyond the western verge of the world as known to them. That such allusions should be vague, was inevitable. If they had any foundation in a knowledge by elder generations of this western hemisphere, the tradition had come down to them by the oral transmissions of centuries; while their knowledge of their own eastern hemisphere was limited and very imperfect. "The Cassiterides, from which tin is brought"—assumed to be the British Isles,—were known to Herodotus only as uncertainly located islands of the Atlantic of which he had no direct information. When Assuryuchurabal, the founder of the palace at Nimrud, conquered the people who lived on the banks of the Orontes from the confines of Hamath to the sea, the spoils obtained from them included one hundred talents of *anna*, or tin; and the same prized metal is repeatedly named in cuneiform inscriptions. The people trading in tin, supposed to be identical with the Shirutana, were the merchants