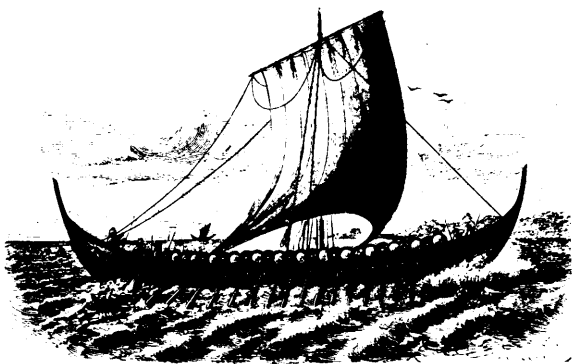


of the narratives of the famous voyages which the Norsemen are believed to have made between 986 and 1012 to the shores of Labrador, Newfoundland, Cape Breton and Nova Scotia, and as far as some part of New England. The countries which are described in Sagas as Helluland or land of rock, as Markland or land of wood, and as Vinland or land of Vines, may have been Labrador, Nova Scotia and Massachusetts. It seems undeniable that such

voyages were made, and the Norsemen were the first Europeans who saw the eastern shores of Canada. Being inured to the sea, they handled with great skill vessels which were even safer and more manageable than the clumsy caravels in which Columbus led the way to the discovery of North and South America. Greenland, from which Leif and his compatriots sailed to Vinland, is easily accessible to the countries which they are believed to have visited; and it is nothing strange that, when once Biarne had brought to Greenland an account of new lands which he had found by accident, other adventurous sailors in late years should have succeeded in reaching Vinland.

It is certain, however, that no permanent settlements were made by the Norsemen in any part of those countries, and their voyages do not appear to have in any way influenced the action of Columbus. They were forgotten for centuries, until the Sagas in which they were hidden were studied and given to the modern world by Thorfæus and Rafn, Scandinavian scholars of repute, whose researches have been followed up by many indefatigable students who have expended much ingenuity on a subject, undoubtedly full of charm and interest, and at the same time as elusive as the *Fata Morgana*.

Lief Ericsson's memory has been rescued from oblivion by the erection of an appropriate monument in one of the



NORSE SHIP OF TWELFTH CENTURY.

squares of the city of Boston.* One enthusiastic antiquarian, some years ago, even built at his own expense a stone tower on some doubtful ruins which had been unearthed on the banks of the Charles river near Boston, and which he confidently believed were the remains of one of the settlements which the Norseman founded in Vinland, and to which he gave the name of Norumbega, that fabulous city which so long eluded the search of credulous sailors in those by-gone centuries when America was still a continent of mystery.

COLUMBUS AND CABOT.

Centuries later than the Norse voyages, Portuguese mariners sailed around the southern cape of Africa and found their way to India, China and the Spice Islands. Columbus then was stimulated by a bold and restless ambition to reach the rich countries of Cathay and Ind by what he believed was the shortest route—the unexplored western ocean with its mysterious islands. After the successful voyages of Columbus, Spain and Portugal attempted to divide between them, with the full authority of the Pope of Rome, all those lands which the courage and enterprise of their maritime adventurers had discovered, when suddenly there appeared on this great field of maritime exploration an Italian sailor, Giovanni Cabota, and England, through

*See Frontispiece. For fuller information, see "Discovery of America, by Norsemen." Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1888.