

Before taking up the practical part of this subject and showing the position of British America as a Maritime Power, I must first refer briefly to those maritime adventurers who have particularly associated their names with the provinces and laid the foundation of England's colonial empire on this continent. In dealing with this part of the subject, I shall not be able to relate anything that is new,—the names of these maritime adventurers must be familiar to all, and their achievements may be even as a twice-told tale; yet there is such a charm and such a romance about their lives and the world owes them so much, that the essayist, like the lecturer or the historian, is impelled to linger for a while and recall their history. In the days of youth, when the world is yet before us, and our sympathies are easily aroused, the story of adventure must ever possess the deepest charm; but indeed none of us ever become so old that our hearts fail to beat responsive to the record of some heroic deed or we cannot follow, with the most absorbing interest, the explorer who ventures into unknown countries—whether it be Livingstone or Baker struggling through African jungles, in constant peril from savage blacks, or even more dangerous Miasma of tropical swamps; or whether it be Kane, Hayes, or other intrepid pioneers steadily advancing towards that "Open Polar Sea," whose secrets have so long been concealed by almost impenetrable barriers of icebergs and glaciers.

#### EARLY MARITIME ADVENTURE.

The student of American history will remember that it has been contended that the continent of America was actually visited by enterprising mariners previous to the voyages of Columbus and the Cabots. The French affirm, and adduce certain evidence to show, that the Basques, "that primeval people, older than history," had, on their search after cod, ventured as far as Newfoundland, which they called "Baccaloas," or the Basque term for that fish; and it is certainly a noteworthy fact that "Baccaloas" still clings to an island on the coast. It is also contended that eight or nine hundred years ago the Norwegian navigators extended their voyages to those waters. About a hundred years before the Norman conquest of England, say the Danish writers, one Biørne or Beaine, sailed from Iceland for Greenland, in search of his father, who had sailed thither but never returned. Whilst engaged in this filial duty, he got lost in the fog, and discovered an unknown country. Others followed in Biørne's route and came to a land which they called Markland, and Vinland, and is believed to have been a portion of the Northern continent. But it is not necessary to dwell on what are after all vague traditions of the shadowy past, furnished up by enthusiastic antiquaries anxious to give their countries the glory of having first discovered the new world. Authentic history alone commences with the voyages of Columbus and the Cabots, who stand out prominently as the pioneers of all modern maritime enterprise. In the year 1492 Columbus gave to the world the heritage of the West, and opened up a new and unlimited field of action to the enterprise of the nations of Europe.