

which the most sceptical of their historians would hardly have ventured to dispute. In their eyes Agamemnon was not, as one school of modern critics regard him, a mere shadow projected on the blank background of an unknown past, and of which we shall never grasp the substance. This *magni nominis umbra* to the ancients suggested a real personality, — a king whose disastrous fate, coming so soon after his triumphant return from Troy, served in after ages as the favorite theme of epic and tragic poetry; his memory, embalmed in the immortal verse of Æschylus and his brother dramatists, still lives on; and it is not without violence to deep-rooted associations that an old-fashioned scholar can train himself to think of Agamemnon as merely a name representing a dynasty, still less as one of the *dramatis personæ* in a solar myth.”¹

Your Committee feel that they have been fortunate in “blundering” in good company, at least, in claiming, in their “old-fashioned” way, Agamemnon as an historical personage worthy of being named in the same breath with even Leif, the son of Eric, of whom Mr. Fiske himself declares that “it is an abuse of language to say that he discovered America.”²

The controversy over the historical character of the Sagas will be settled in accordance with the character of the minds of the disputants, — whether they are willing to decide only upon the weight of the evidence, or are swayed by credulity based upon conjecture. So far the verdict of the majority of the students of history has not been in accord with Mr. Fiske’s views.

No other member rising, Mr. ROGER WOLCOTT, from the third section, communicated some letters belonging to the early period of the Revolutionary War, and said : —

Since the last meeting of the Society we have passed an anniversary the significance of which to earlier generations of Bostonians is probably obscured to very many of our citizens to-day by the coincidence of another and more ostentatious commemoration. It is the latter that calls our governors and mayors to the steps of State House and City Hall to review the passing pageant of marching men and burdened barouches, while the flags flying from our public buildings are the silent reminders of the former.

¹ C. T. Newton, *Essays on Art and Archæology*, p. 248, from the *Edinburgh Review*, 1878.

² *Discovery of America*, vol. i. p. 255.