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OLD NEW WORLD TALES.

THE NORTHMEN IN AMERICA.

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ONCE there was a man, living in Norway, called Harald Haarfagr. He was a Jarl—one of many Jarls, or petty kings, or great chiefs, who, at that time, shared amongst them the rule over the lands and coasts of Norway. Much and long-continued fighting they had had, too, in their incessant disputes over those same shares. But Harald, called Haarfagr—or *Fair-haired*—was more than a common Jarl, as he was a very uncommon man. His father before him had made himself comparatively powerful amongst his fellows of the Norwegian Jarldoms; so that Harald, in succeeding him, succeeded almost to a state of downright kingdom. He, at the outset of his public career, determined that he would forthwith settle that point beyond all possible dispute.

It is reported that the youthful Harald found himself in love with a

beautiful young lady, named *Gyda*, and made her the offer of his hand. But the Lady Gyda was as ambitious and lofty-minded as she was beautiful. She certainly did not give her young lover a cool reception; for she met his proposal with stinging words which might have instantly terminated the suit of any one of less spirit than Harald. They were to the effect that he had better go and crush out the independence of that host of neighbouring Jarls who were carrying things with so high a hand on land and sea, and win a kingdom for himself, as one great warrior had recently done in Sweden, and another in Denmark. Then he might come to her with proposals of marriage, and she might deign to look upon them with favour, but not until then. Harald swore to himself that he would take her at her word. Nay, he swore that he would