

explored several hundred miles of the coast. In 1497-8, John and Sebastine Cabot discovered Newfoundland, and navigated a considerable part of the coast of North America. In ten years after Columbus had first set foot on American soil, the vast length of the continent from North to South, had been traced by Europeans.

Before the earliest of these dates, the Venetians appear to have known something of habitable regions in the West. The West India Islands are marked in maps published at Venice in 1424. It has long been known also, that records of American discovery existed amongst the curios remains of the old northern literature which engages the researches of antiquaries in Denmark and Sweden; and from which our Anglo-Saxon history is yet to derive important contributions. Some account of these records were published in 1837 by the Royal Society of Antiquaries at Copenhagen. And the compiler of that work has recently written a short sketch on the subject for more extensive circulation which comes to us through the press of the United States.

Before laying before our readers the particulars of these early discoveries, it may be proper to state one or two facts regarding the origin of these Icelanders. Iceland, now an appendage of the crown of Denmark, is a large island in the Northern Ocean, on the border of the Arctic Circle. Barley is the only grain that can be raised. Very few vegetables can be raised to perfection, so that its inhabitants depend chiefly on the fish of the surrounding seas for the means of sustenance. It was discovered by a Dane in 853. A colony of Norwegians was commenced in 874, many of whom belonged to the most civilized families of the North. There, on a stern ice-bound rock of the ocean, a flourishing republic was established. Under shelter of its free institutions, literature and the arts fled before the sullen barbarity which overspread the rest of Europe—priest and pope—Iceland had its theological writers, its historians and poets, when the rest of Europe had nothing better than monks, hermits, and ruffian soldiers. Reduced first by Norway and afterward by Denmark, it lost its independence, but even the lower classes have not yet lost the literary elevation which characterised their origin. Hardy fishermen persevere, criticise and relish the classic remains of antiquity, and the traveller may find a guide or an inn keeper who can converse with him in elegant Latin.

Such were the people who led the way in transatlantic discovery. As early as 877 one of their adventurous sailors obtained a distant view of the mountains of Greenland. In 983, but a few years after their own settlement was complete, Greenland was visited by Erik the Red, who three years afterwards, planted a small Icelandic colony on its coast. This colony continued to advance so that in 1121, a bishop's see was founded there, which existed for 300 years. On a voyage from Greenland to Ireland, in 986, a member of this colony being driven out to sea, obtained a first sight of those portions of America, which his countrymen afterwards visited. Leif the fortunate son of Erik the Red, undertook a voyage of discovery in 1000, and visited Newfoundland, which

he named *Hellaland*; Nova Scotia, which he named *Markland*; and New England, which he named *Vineland*.

In 1006, Thorfin Karlsefue a distinguished Icelandic, visited Greenland and married a granddaughter of Erik the Red. The following year accompanied by his wife, and 160 men on board three vessels, he set sail for Vineland where he remained three years, and had many communications with the Aborigines.

The nautical, geographical, and astronomical observations recorded in the ancient documents, from which these facts are gathered, are said to place the situation of the countries visited beyond all question. The notices of the soil, climate, and productions, are also said to be characteristic. New England was by them named Vineland, from the vine growing wild there. And it may be asked, what could the natives of Iceland know of the vine? This is explained in the record, where it is stated that a German, named Tyrka, who accompanied Leif, recognised the wild vines, from having seen them in his native land. It is pointed out as a remarkable coincidence, that the English discoverers named the large islands off the coast of New England, Martha's Vineyard.

This carries with certainty five hundred years back of Columbus; and is perhaps more curious than useful. It does not aid us at all in our enquiries after the source of the Aborigines; and it throws no light on the question, were the ancients at all acquainted with this continent? There is, as our readers are probably aware, some faint allusions which are sufficient to provoke discussion on this subject. Several authors, Greek and Roman, have described a large island of romantic beauty, called Atlantis—far to the west in the Atlantic ocean. What they say of the island, is manifestly fictitious; but what gives an appearance of actual knowledge to their mention of the island itself, is, that they speak of an immense continent, lying still farther beyond it.

We must wait the farther developments of historical and antiquarian research, to which several unexplored mines have recently been presented. Meantime we can see, and gratefully acknowledge the providential guidance of the more modern discoverers, by whom a new world was opened up just at the time the interests of religion and humanity needed, and just at the time when those who could best use the gift, were ready to embrace it.

NORTHERN ANTIQUITIES.—The Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries, Copenhagen, are about to publish a new series of Remains of the Old Literature, alluded to above, which, it is expected, will throw great light on British and Irish history. The Society invite subscriptions of one guinea a-year, in return for which the works will be forwarded as published.

¶ We would call attention to a notice on our last page, of the Quarterly Meeting of the Board of the Regular Baptist Missionary Society of Canada, to be held with the Boston church, near Waterford, C.W. Arrangements are being made to hold a public missionary meeting.

REASON AND REVELATION: or the Religion, Philosophy, and Civilization of the Ancient Heathen, contrasted with Christianity, and its legitimate consequences. By the Rev. JOHN JENNINGS, United Presbyterian Church, Toronto. Toronto: J. Cleland, 1852.

This is the title of a tract republished from the Canadian Presbyterian Magazine, written by the able and excellent editor of that journal. We have pleasure in speaking of the ability with which it is written, and, in expressing our confidence in the sincerity of the author's desire to do good. And yet he will bear with us when we question the adaptation of his tract to accomplish his end. His object is to counteract the vain philosophy which aims at the depreciation of Christianity by extolling the "intellectuality and refinement of the pre-Christian era." To accomplish this, he contrasts the religion, philosophy, and civilization of the Ancients, with Christianity in its universal adaptation to the spiritual, moral, and physical condition of man. In discussing these points, Mr. Jennings brings out much truth, and important truth, yet the impression of his arguments, as a whole, is in many respects unsatisfactory, since it seems to place the gospel on a low and disadvantageous ground, by condescending to try it as one of a number of conflicting systems in the world, although it is proved to be the best of them, the gospel is dishonoured by an appeal to the general state of society in so-called Christian lands, for the proof of its efficacy. Christianity itself takes its own position singly and alone, as revealing the only name given under heaven, or among men, whereby they can be saved. And instead of accepting of the compliments that are offered by those who look to its temporal benefits, in the ameliorated condition of these nations where it has been preached, it turns a look of as withering condemnation upon the more refined wickedness, and the more polished infidelity, of England and America, as ever it directed to Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah. The gospel is not flattered by the testimonies which the genius and worth of Newton, Locke, Boyle, and LeClerc, pay to the purity and sublimity of its morals, and the elevation of its aim. But if, as there is reason to believe, they, with many others of their class whose commendation of the scriptures are often quoted, were yet rejectors of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, it says to them unequivocally, "he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God." They, and they alone are a practical proof of the excellency of the Scriptures, who by understanding them, have been turned from darkness to light. "I would make more account of the testimony of poor Joseph, the London idiot, than that of the illustrious Newton or Locke"—says a great and good man.

Mr. Jennings is the most romantic and chivalrous of all the advocates of a gradual, but ultimately complete elevation of the world, under the present dispensation, and by existing instrumentalities, when, as he alleges, "the earth is to be delivered to a great extent from the curse, by the universal evangelization of mankind." He has the good sense to perceive, and the candour to ac-