

on the Labrador coast, and effected some brief settlement on more than one point further south. The incidents are full of interest for us, but the names of Bjarni Herjulfson and Lief the son of Eric the Red, are associated with very vague traces of this first authenticated European discovery of the western continent.

The part played by the Scandinavian stock in European history proves their abundant aptitude to have been the organizers of a Northland of their own in the New World. The Northmen lingered behind, in their first home in the Scandinavian peninsula, while other tribes from the Baltic first wasted and then revolutionized the Roman world. But they were nursing a vigorous youth, which ere long, as pagan Dane, and then as Norman, stamped a new character on mediæval Europe. Their presence in the New World rests on indubitable evidence; but the very definiteness of its character in their inhospitable northern retreat helps to destroy all faith in any mere conjectural fancies relative to their settlement on points along the Atlantic seaboard which they are supposed to have visited. So far as Greenland is concerned, they left there indisputable literate records of their colonization of the region to which, in contrast to the Iceland from whence they came, they gave the inapt name it still retains. The runic inscriptions brought to Copenhagen in 1831 not only determine the sites of settlements effected by the companions and successors of Eric, the founder of the first Greenland colony in A.D. 986; but they serve to show the kind of evidence to be looked for, alike to the north and the south of the St. Lawrence, if any traces yet survive of their having not only visited, but attempted to colonize the old Helluland, or Newfoundland, Markland, or Nova Scotia, and Vinland, or New England. Their genuine memorials are not less definite than those left by the Romans in Gaul or Britain; and corresponding traces of them in the assumed Vinland and elsewhere in the United States, have been perseveringly, but vainly, sought for. The Assonet, or Dighton Rock, on the Taunton river, Massachusetts, need not now be reproduced. Its fancied runes have long since been abandoned as a credulous figment. As to the Huiderk inscription, professedly found in 1867, graven on a rock on the river Potomac, it may be noted, in passing, as an ingenious hoax fashioned out of the genuine Greenland inscriptions, reading: *HUR HUIER SYASY FAGHARDR AIRSTFIRTHINGR IKI A KILDI SYSTE THORG SAMFETHRA HALFTHRIGR GLED GOD SAL HENAR*. Then follows what its interpreter rendered the date 1051.\*

Runic inscriptions on the New England seaboard, and so far south as the Potomac, would, if genuine, give an entirely novel aspect to our study of Pre-Columbian American history, with all its possibilities of older intercourse with the eastern hemisphere. But it is the same whether we seek for traces of American colonization in the 10th or the 15th century, in so far as all native history is concerned. They equally little suffice to furnish evidence of relationship, in blood, language, arts or customs, between any people of the eastern hemisphere and the native American races. We are indeed tempted from time to time to review indications suggestive of an Asiatic or other old-world source for the American aborigines; and in nearly every system of ethnical classification they are, with good reason, classed as Mongolidae; but if their pedigree is derived from an Asiatic stock, the evidence has yet to be marshalled which shall place on any well-established

\* Washington Union, June, 1867.

*Ibid* Canadian Journal, N.S., vol. xii., p. 140.

basis the proper sphere. The language, although studied

It came archaeology,—America,—is which results study of man civilization; a higher cone the novel view of primitive phases of sav formed a delicate acquisitions living races s to the social on more than but no where presented in in no degree ons skill and vations of an occasionally desired shape acquiring by of the patient amid all the between them have been as when we ful northern fro vening ages

But wha phenomenon same rudime remarkable Canada but illustrations civilization. widely diver America; a striking cor and of arts.