

it not also prompt thousands to carry the arts of civilized life among the barbarous tribes,—and does it not animate the Christian missionary to follow continually the steps of discovery, the bearer of an enlightened and holy religion? It does not primarily incite the philosopher or the missionary to their expeditions: but, in the breast where a love of science or religion has already directed the desires, either to gather information in distant and unknown countries, or to carry thither the sacred Gospel, the spirit of adventure throws a thousand charms around the attempt,—lessens the difficulties, smooths the path, and occasions a love of those exertions which are most arduous, and the scenes which are most dangerous and trying.

Of the wanderings of the first pastoral tribes we know but little or nothing. A people supported entirely by agriculture, with the exception of hunting and fishing, spread themselves over wide tracts of land which, after awhile, they desert for others more fertile, and where—the human species not having before inhabited it—the beasts of the forest still remain in immense numbers, and the soil, yet unbroken, is more fit for the purposes of a race unacquainted with any but the rudest arts of tillage. The first objects, of course, in the migrations of these rude inhabitants of the globe are their natural wants; but they are further impelled, and much more strongly at last, by curiosity and a love of action. Such was the case with the primitive tribes,—but, from their ignorance of letters, the world is unacquainted, for the most part, with the history of their wanderings. When, in their continual progress, portions of them reached the sea-coast, we may naturally imagine, in the words of a writer upon the subject, that “the love of gain, as well as of adventure, soon impelled them to launch upon the waves, and direct their course to distant countries. But,” he adds, “the complicated art of navigation required many ages to bring it to perfection. The discoveries of the early navigators were as perishable as they were vaguely described.”

The Scriptures present us with the earliest records, historical and geographical. But it was not from the traditions of the Hebrews, who were “an inland and pastoral nation,” that the Mosaic account is gathered. We cannot but suppose it, even had we no other reason but this, to be derived from a different and higher source. This account, however, after furnishing a relation of the gradual dispersion of the human species, is confined to a peculiar race, and does not bring us down to the early history of a maritime and

commercial people. It is true that we find some information respecting the Egyptians,—and, in other portions of the Scripture, we receive some account of the trade and enterprises of the Phœnicians; indeed, of the latter, the principal maritime nation of antiquity, this is almost the only relation that exists. The geographical knowledge of the Greeks was accurate,—but “it may, without much injustice,” says the writer we before quoted, “be stated as not extending far beyond Greece, Egypt, Asia Minor, and the islands. Beyond these limits, all objects appear in the prismatic hue of wonder and enchantment; we find nothing but monsters, nations of dreams, and the abodes of bliss. These delusive forms were chiefly gathered in the western, or rather north-western quarter of the hemisphere. All the early writers on Greece believed in the existence of certain regions situated in the West, beyond the bounds of their actual knowledge,—and, as it appears, of too fugitive a nature to be ever fixed within the circle of authentic geography. Homer describes, at the extremity of the ocean, the Elysian plain, where, under a serene sky, the favourites of Jove, exempt from the common lot of mortals, enjoy eternal felicity. Hesiod, in like manner, sets the Happy Isles, the abode of departed heroes, beyond the deep ocean. The Hesperia of the Greeks continually fled before them as their knowledge advanced, and they saw the terrestrial paradise still disappearing in the West.”

With the increasing population of the earth, discovery and geographical knowledge continued, of course, to advance. During the middle ages, the Arabians, the Italians, the Portuguese, and the Spaniards, were the greatest commercial nations, and consequently the most remarkable for the extension of their navigation. Among the most remarkable discoveries of the middle ages was that of Greenland. It was made by the Norwegians who, in the tenth century, colonized Iceland. One of their number, a noble who bore the name of Eric Rauda, or *red head*, having been banished from Iceland for the crime of murder, determined to make a voyage of discovery, during the term of his exile, to the West. He succeeded not only in landing upon an island which, it is supposed, was situated near the southern coast of Greenland, but in exploring a portion of the continent. He returned to Iceland, and described the country which he had visited as possessed of a fertile soil, rich meadows, and “abundant fisheries.” He painted all that he had seen in alluring colours, and gave to his new discovery the name of Greenland. The advan-