

year 1000, the *annus mirabilis* of mediæval history, when Leif, the wise and stately son of Eric the Red, "made up his mind to go and see what the coasts to the south of Greenland were like." He sailed from Brattahlid with a crew of thirty-five men. "First they found the land which Bjarni had found last. Then sailed they to the land and cast anchor, and put off a boat and went ashore, and saw there was no grass. Mickle glaciers were over all the higher parts; but it was like a plain of rock from the glaciers to the sea, and it seemed to them that the land was good for nothing." Leif gave the place the name of Helluland (flat stone land). He then sailed on to countries which he names Markland and Vinland. The location of these places has been a subject of the warmest controversy. Helluland, however, it is perhaps safe to say, was either Labrador or the northern coast of Newfoundland.

This is not the place to describe the expeditions of the Northmen to Vinland, which took place after the return of Leif Ericson. At first there were several attempts to found a colony, but the hostility of the Indians and the jealousies of the settlers brought them to naught. In 1121 Eric Gnipsson, who was appointed by Paschal II "bishop of Greenland and Vinland in *partibus infidelium*," went in search of Vinland; it is so recorded in at least six vellums. His is the last Viking expedition of which we have authentic information. But it is extremely probable that there were voyages of which we have no record. To these daring sea-farers the sea had no terrors; in their beautiful open ships, which were probably stronger and certainly swifter than the Spanish vessels of the time of Columbus, they were accustomed to traverse long stretches