

surface is from 4,000 to 5,000 feet above the level of the sea. It is barren, marshy, and bristled with peaks, crowned by the Snæ Bren, the greatest mass of perpetual snow and glaciers on the continent of Europe.

This iron-bound coast of Norway has been lashed for ages by the surges of the ocean till it is indented into numberless deep and narrow inlets called fjords, by means of which the waters penetrate for miles into the very heart of the mountain region. Those surges, while working out cape, and promontory, and precipitous cliffs, have left a fringe of numberless rocky islets along the coast. These are of various size and elevation. Some of them, two or three miles long, are the abodes of pilots and fishermen, and exhibit plots of green pasture-land, while others are gigantic rock-columns, the palaces of the gulls and the puffins, whitened by their countless wings and echoing to their discordant screams.

Under the shelter of these columnar isles, which act as a natural breakwater, we find ourselves between them and the main land in comparatively calm, safe seas; shielded from the fury of the waves, almost as by the reefs which guard the coral isles of the Pacific. Peace to thee, "gamle Norge!" (old Norway.) We are in the haunts of thy Sea-Kings, thy Vikings, and Berserks; and must return to the century of our own Alfred to remember the days of thy Paganism.

In the eighth century little was known of the northern regions of Europe, except that they were ruled by numerous petty kings. When a king died, one son inherited his land, and all the rest were dismissed with ships, their sole property, to roam and plunder for their subsistence, and to become kings of the sea. They boasted that they never slept under a smoky roof, or drank around a hearth. To be fierce was their first virtue; never to weep for the death of a friend; to eat raw flesh and blood; to tear the infant from its mother's breast and toes it from one to another on their spears.

As the country of Norway was very unproductive, consisting of mountain, moor, and forest, the greater part of the population dwelt along the sea-coast, where alone the land was fit for pasture or tillage. Their poverty was a temptation to piracy, and led them to plant themselves on the more fertile shores of their neighbours. The Northmen had twice landed in England before the end of the eighth century; in the ninth, thirty-five ships poured out their hordes of sea-kings and warriors at Charnmouth. Egbert drove them back with loss; but this only led to after assaults in Cornwall, Devonshire, and elsewhere.

The deeds of their most dreadful chieftain, Ragnar Lodbrog, are recited in his Quida, or death song, which sums up all the ravages that he had been concerned in on the coasts of Europe for many years. In his old age he fell upon Northumberland. Ella, the British chief, took him alive, and doomed him, with a cruel revenge, to be cast naked into a deep pit full of vipers, where he expired, under their venomous stings. A few lines of his death-song will paint the temper of those times.

Referring to England, he says:  
"I have hewed with my sword till hundreds lay round the rocks;

The hawk and the wild beasts plucked the flesh,  
And blood trickled to the sea, reddening the clear wave.

Heroes invite me. I come with no words of fear.  
We shall drink all out of large hollowed skulls.  
Grim death glares at me; vipers dwell in the palace of my heart:

But I die without a groan. The gods bid me come home—

The hours of this life are over."

Such were the triumphs of European heathenism. But while Ragnar's war-boats had been covering the sea, and collecting the most savage spirits out of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark,

a son of "Charlemagne the Great," surnamed, in contrast to his parent, "Louis the Feeble," had founded a monastery on the banks of the Weser, in Westphalia, for the education of missionaries. It was called New Corbie and produced men of various spiritual power—one of whom at least has a memory still respected in the North. This was Anchar, one in whom we believe was the spirit of God. He was sent by the Emperor Louis into Jutland, and thence into Sweden; and there he found that the slaves (Germans, Gauls, and Britons) whom the Sea-Kings had been wont to bring home with them had carried into the families whom they served, like seeds lodged by the wind, some ideas of Christianity,—very imperfect, it is true, but which had yet caused Björn, the King of Sweden, to send to the Emperor Louis for a missionary.

During Anchar's voyage he was robbed by pirates of all he had, including forty-five books which he carried for the instruction of the people; some of which were, no doubt, from the character of the man, manuscript gospels. On his arrival at Sigtuna, the capital, which stood near the present Stockholm, he and his companion were welcomed with joy; and their simplicity and poverty dispose us to believe that, as it was said, "the first Church of the North was formed under the visible co-operation of the grace of God."

By his patron's desire, the Pope afterwards nominated Anchar a bishop. His mission proceeded very slowly amid the war and piracy of the age, though the fruit of perseverance came at last. Towards the close of the thirty-five years of missionary labour, Anchar was heard to say that though the work might be interrupted through the sins of those engaged in it, it could not fail, as the name of the Lord must be declared for salvation to the ends of the earth.

Anchar established convents and schools, visited the sick and poor, and shared with them his last mite. He served the poor before he ate himself. He wore a coarse garment, lived on bread and water, and worked with his own hands. All the labourers whom he sent forth were desired to adopt the same simple habits, and to require nothing from their new converts.

As he lay dying, a circle of praying friends gathered round him, and his last words were he fell asleep were, "Oh, God, have mercy on me a poor sinner!" A contemporary of Clandius of Turin, and of Cyril and Methodius, he did like work with them on the hills of the pine-clad North. They, with King Alfred, were the lights of a dark century.

The good influences of Anchar were continued in the next century by a Danish king called Harald Blastand, who himself embraced the Christian religion, and hoped that it would soften the ferocity of his people. He seems to have been instrumental in its partial introduction into Norway, from whence the light of a dim Christianity spread to the Orkneys, to Iceland, and even to Greenland.

But this was not the age of the Bible; the multitude had not then the true key of knowledge within their reach, and such as had it, for the most part but partially unlocked the sacred treasures, and crushed or distorted them in their unholy grasp.

Having thus glanced at Ancient Norway, we must reserve till another number the interesting details of the introduction of the printed Scriptures into the country, and also those of efforts recently made to scatter the Sacred Volume afresh through the hamlets which fringe its fjords, and among the solitary farm-houses scattered on the slopes of its mountains.

#### BIBLE WONDERS

This book—a multifarious collection of oracles written in various ages and countries, and at intervals of two thousand years, having in it every form of composition, familiar and pro-

found, songs and history, ethics and biography, scenes from the hearth, and episodes from national annals—numbering, too, among its authors, him who wore a crown and him who threw a net, the Persian prime minister, and Cæsar's fettered captive—written, too, sections of it, under the shadow of the Pyramids, and others on the banks of the Euphrates, some in the isle of Patmos, and others in the Mamertine dungeons—this book, so lofty in its tone, and harmonious in its counsels, has become the more venerable from its age, and the more wonderful as its history and results are examined and understood. Whence springs its originality if its claims are disallowed? It tells us of expeditions prior to Jason and the Argonauts; it describes martial adventures long before Achilles and Troy; its ethical system preceded Thales and Pythagoras; its muse was vocal before Orpheus and Hesiod; its Judges flourished before consuls and archons; its feasts and gatherings rejoiced the tribes where the Nemean games had no existence; and it reckoned by Sabbaths and jubilees when neither Olympiad nor Iustrium divided the calendar. It embodies the prophetic wish of the Athenian sage; for it "scatters that darkness which covers our souls, and tells us how to distinguish good from evil." The valley of the Nile has now uncovered its hieroglyphics to confirm and illustrate its claims; and Nineveh, out of the wreck and rubbish of three thousand years, has at length yielded up its ruins to prove and glorify the Hebrew oracles.—  
Dr. EADIE.

#### SOWING AND REAPING.

Some five or six-and-twenty years ago, two ladies, residing in the suburbs of London, were paying visits in their district on behalf of the Bible Society. Such visits are not now uncommon; but at that time a canvass for this purpose, house by house, was a plan almost new and untried. In one instance the ladies were answered by a young man, who came to the door with a book in his hand. They made known their desire that every house should be supplied with the Holy Scriptures; and he remarked, "Well, I have just been reading the Koran." They rejoined, "Ought you not now to read the Bible?"

They offered to his inspection specimen types of well printed and well bound Bibles. The young man hesitated, and offered a small sum as a donation, evidently to free himself from his visitors; but they pressed the inquiry, expressing a hope that "he was not an unbeliever." He assured them he was not, but that, having been brought up a Roman Catholic, he had no interest in the object of their visit, or sympathy with the Society.

Thus closed their first interview. But the ladies were not discouraged. They called again; and eventually a bible was subscribed for, and ere long placed in the young man's hand, with the remark, "this is the Word of God. All we ask of you is that you read it."

And the young man did read it—read it for the first time in his life; and read it attentively. The Holy Book of Truth led him, after many conscientious struggles, to attend a Protestant place of worship. Months passed away, during which that Bible did its own work in his heart, and in the heart of his mother, and of a young friend who resided with them, gradually revealing to their darkened minds the full light of gospel day; and then the young man united himself to a Christian church.

At the time the Bible reached him, he was about to commence a school in the neighbourhood. He was led to devote himself much to the study of languages—entered the ministry—was blessed in his sphere of labour; and, subsequently, went forth as a missionary to the heathen.

The ladies who had procured him the Bible