

America.* This disagreement between the two editors would throw great doubt on the Norse theory. If Prof. Rafn is correct, then the Norse did not discover the continent, but took advantage of the achievement of the Irish. If we argue after the same methods, then the honor must be accorded to the Irish, while the Norse are shorn of all the glory there was in it.

Those who have presumed to edit the sagas must also edit the letter of Columbus, so as to make it appear that he was acquainted with the voyages of Erik, Leif and Thorfinn Karlsefne. Prof. R. B. Anderson teaches that Columbus obtained from the writings of Adam of Bremen the Norse discovery of America, and this information induced him to go to Iceland, where the "Icelanders must have told him, as they state in their Sagas, that far to the south of Vinland was Irland-it-Mikla, or Great Ireland; that this Great Ireland extended certainly as far south as the present Florida, and hence his shortest and most pleasant route would be to sail about due west from Spain."† DeCosta says that "Columbus knew of the westward voyages of the Icelanders is sufficiently evident. He clearly believed, as the Norsemen did, namely, that Greenland was an extension of Norway, and that Vinland lay contiguous, while what he desired was to reach the eastern coast of Asia."‡ Mrs. Shipley emphatically says: "The fact that the rumors of these vast discoveries in the west reached every seaport in Southern Europe, as well as the Eternal City; the fact that Gudrid, the wife of Karlsefne, visited Rome after her three years' sojourn in Vinland; the fact that she narrated these experiences at length to the holy fathers; the fact that Rome had appointed bishops to both Greenland and Vinland; the fact that Columbus, an Italian by birth, and naturally aware of these important events, went to Iceland in order to pursue the investigations, to which all this had given him the clue. After his visit to Iceland he made out to find America, as any one else could have found it, after obtaining definite directions."§

The following is quoted from Beamish: "Having had access to the archives of the island, and ample opportunity of conversing with the learned there through the medium of the Latin language, he might easily have obtained a complete knowledge of the discoveries of the Northmen—sufficient, at least, to confirm his belief in the existence of a western continent."||

Quotations to the same purport could be greatly extended, but these are sufficient. On what basis do these affirmations, declarations and assumptions rest? There is none other than the solitary letter of Columbus himself, which was preserved by his son. This vague letter the son cites in the biography of his father: "In the month of February, in the year 1477, I sailed

*Pre Columbian Discovery, p. 160.

†America Not Discovered by Columbus, pp. 13-15.

‡Pre-Columbian Discovery, p. 56.

§Icelandic Discoveries, p. 69.

||Ibid., 106.