

it was covered, they gave the name of Greenland. When these hardy explorers returned to Norway, they found the idols of Scandinavia hurled to the dust. The king had embraced the true faith, and the whole people had renounced paganism. A missionary set sail in the first vessel that steered towards the new-found land, and ere long the little colony was Catholic. Iceland and Greenland soon had their churches, their convents, their bishops, their colleges, their libraries, their apostolic men. The explorers Beorn and Leif having coasted southerly along the Atlantic shore, towards the bays where the countless spires of Boston and New York now tower, missionaries immediately offered to go and preach the Gospel to the savage nations of the South; and it is certain that in 1120 Bishop Eric visited in person Vinland, or the land of vines. The colonies of the Northmen on the west coast of Greenland continued to flourish until 1406, when the seventeenth and last bishop of Gardar was sent from Norway; those on the eastern coast subsisted till 1540, when they were destroyed by a physical revolution which accumulated the ice in that zone from the 60th degree of latitude. Thus a focus of Christianity not only existed in Greenland, but from it rays of faith momentarily illumined part of the territory now embraced in the United States, to leave it sunk in darkness for some centuries more.