

nate propensity to kill, for the sole purpose, and through the unreasoning desire, of mere killing. Thorvald and his companions, without any ado, killed these Skroelings then and there—killed them just as they would have killed eight Norway rats.

This needless slaughtering of the Aborigines quickly brought its retribution. When the Northmen went on board ship they saw, for the first time, in the inside of the frith, a number of heights or protuberances, which they supposed might be human dwellings. They were doubtless Indian wigwams, just thrown up. After their exertions on shore, the whole ship's crew fell into a deep sleep. They were awakened by loud shouts, and saw an innumerable crowd of canoes rushing towards them from the interior of the frith. Thorvald gave orders to 'put out the battle-skreen'—a sort of wooden bulkhead or shield, run up from the bulwarks—and to defend themselves as well as they could, but to 'fight little against them.' This was done, and the Skroelings, after they had given them a shower of arrows, took to flight. It was then found, upon inquiry, that Thorvald alone was wounded, an arrow having passed between the edge of the ship and the shield, and pierced him under the arm. Thorvald, from the first, believed the wound to be mortal, and so it proved. He ordered his men to get ready instantly to depart; 'but,' said he, 'ye shall bear me to that cape where I thought it best to dwell; it may be that a true word fell from my mouth, that I should dwell there for a time; there shall ye bury me, and set up crosses at my head and feet, and call the place *Krossness* for ever, in all time to come.' The Saga here adds: 'Greenland was then Christianized, but Erik the Red died before Christianity was introduced.' Thorvald died, but all things were done according to his directions. His people remained there for the winter. They gathered grapes and vines; they load-

ed their ship, and in the spring (A.D. 1005), they returned to Eriksfjord, in Greenland, 'and could now tell great things to Leif.'

We must here make a remark about these *Skroelings*, who have just appeared for the first time. Some people have most strangely thought proper to assume that they were Eskimos, or *Esquimaux*, as the name is often and improperly written. We can see no reasonable ground whatever for so wild a conjecture. We have no grounds for belief that ever the Eskimos lived as far south as Massachusetts; or that they ever, at any time, wandered farther south than the northern part of Newfoundland, if even so far. It is a far fetched derivation that of deriving *Skroelinger* from *Smælingar* (diminutive men) in order to make it applicable to the Eskimos. It is obviously derived from *Skroela*, to make dry, in allusion to the smoky, singed-wood colour of the complexions of those savages. Or it may be derived from *Skrekja*, to cry out, to 'screech,' in consequence of the loud shouts, or whooping, with which they rushed into battle. Either characteristic would sufficiently denote aborigines of the same races which still inhabited Vinland and Markland, when those countries were first visited by Europeans of the post-Columbian period; and there is no need of dragging down the Eskimos from the remote polar regions to answer to the description. It is, indeed, rumoured that, on the arrival of the first of these later navigators, they heard from the natives about Mount Hope Bay a tradition that once, in the far past, certain white men had brought a floating house up the Pocasset River, and had for a time dwelt in that vicinity. In another Saga we are told that 'these people—the Skroelings—were dark, and ill-favoured, and had coarse hair on the head; they had large eyes and broad cheeks,' all of which is descriptive of those whom we know as the ordinary North American Indians.