

historian, Torfæus, in the year 1805, claimed for his ancestors the glory of having discovered the New World. This claim had been strengthened by a work published by the Royal Society of Antiquaries at Copenhagen in 1837, and which had imparted a new impulse to this subject. The work was entitled "*Antiquitates Americanæ, sive Scriptores Septentrionales Rerum Ante-Columbianarum in America.*" It was edited by the learned Prof. Rafn, of the University of Copenhagen, and published in the original Icelandic, and accompanied by a Danish and also a Latin translation. This work gives an account of the voyages made to America by the Scandinavian Northmen during the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Their accounts of their early voyages are published from authentic manuscripts which are dated as far back as the tenth century. From this work it would appear that the ancient Northerners explored a great extent of the eastern coasts of North America, repeatedly visited many places in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, fought and traded with the natives, and attempted to establish colonies. The most northern region they called Hellaland (*i. e.* slate land), the country further south they named Muckland (woodland), and the country most southern they called Vinland (vineland),—which is supposed to have extended as far south as Massachusetts or Rhode Island. The general features of the country accord with the descriptions which they have given. The discovery of America by the Northerners is confirmed by an inscription on a rock on the bank of the river Taunton, at a place called Digleton, in the State of Massachusetts, and which until recently had defied all efforts at interpretation. The earliest New England colonists observed the mysterious characters on this rock; and more than 150 years ago Dr. Cotton Mather, of Boston, sent an imperfect drawing of the inscription to the Royal Society. It also attracted the notice of the Rev. Dr. Styles, President of Yale College, nearly 100 years ago, who sent facsimiles of the inscription to many learned societies in Europe,—but all attempts to decipher them were in vain. An accurate drawing of the inscription was made by the Rhode Island Historical Society, a few years since, and a copy was sent to the Royal Society of Northern Antiquities at Copenhagen, which led to a more satisfactory result. The surface of the rock which bears the inscription is about 12 feet in length and 9 feet in height, and is covered with hieroglyphics forming three distinct lines. The characters are deeply engraven in greywacke, and must have required the labour of several days. The lower part of the rock is subject to the

constant action of the tide, in consequence of which several of the characters are obliterated. The word "Thorfinus" and the number "132" are distinctly marked. The "Th" in the Thorfinus are in Icelandic characters, and "orpinus" in the ancient Roman. The 132 was also engraved in the ancient Roman form of writing numerals. The circumstance of the Roman letters being used may be easily explained. Christianity was introduced into Iceland about the end of the tenth century,—at which period there was evidence that the Latin language was cultivated in that country at least by individuals. Now, there is a remarkable coincidence between the monument just described and an account in one of the manuscripts published in the "*Antiquitates Americanæ.*" It is there stated that Thorfinus, an Icelandic chief, made a voyage to Vinland in the year 1000; and that in the course of three years he was killed in a battle with the natives. It is worthy of observation, as proving that they had some knowledge of Christianity, that a cross was placed at the head of his grave. The particulars of Thorfinus's voyage and his frequent battles with the natives are also minutely recorded. His wife, who accompanied him to America, returned after his death to Iceland with her son, who was born in America. This son of Thorfinus became a chieftain; and from him, according to genealogical tables, are descended many eminent men, including Prof. Finn Magnussen and the celebrated sculptor Thorwaldsen. The author concluded by alluding to the supposed discovery of America by Prince Madoc in the twelfth century; the only information respecting which was received from the poems written by Meredyth-ap-Rhys in 1478, of Gafyr Owen in 1480, and Cynfyn-ap-Gronw, who lived in the same period.

*Statistics.*—President, Mr. J. H. Vivian. —J. Fletcher, Esq., read a statement communicated by Mr. Hume, M.P., "On the Annual Increase of Property, and of the Exports and Imports, in Canada," demonstrating the great rapidity with which the most valuable and permanent species of wealth accumulates in Canada, and the extent to which the Province is already able to consume and employ goods of various kinds sent from this country, and to pay for them by its exports to Great Britain and its dependencies. That power will henceforth increase annually, at a rate greatly exceeding that of former years, under the influence of a principle long recognized. An inquiry into the amount of the banking and mercantile capital employed in the trade, shipping, and agriculture of Canada would strengthen and greatly extend these results. The rateable