

B. F. DE COSTA.—“Let us remember that in vindicating the Northmen we honor those who not only give us the first knowledge possessed of the American continent, but to whom we are indebted for much besides that we esteem valuable. For we fable in a great measure when we speak of our Saxon inheritance; it is rather from the Northmen that we have derived our vital energy, our freedom of thought, and, in a measure that we do not yet suspect, our strength of speech. Yet, happily, the people are fast becoming conscious of their indebtedness; so that it is to be hoped that the time is not far distant when the Northmen may be recognized in their right social, political and literary characters, and at the same time, as navigators, assume their true position in the Pre-Columbian Discovery of America.

“The twelfth century was an era of great literary activity in Iceland, and the century following showed the same zeal. Finally Iceland possessed a body of prose literature superior in quantity and value to that of any other modern nation of its time. Indeed, the natives of Europe, at this period, had no prose literature in any modern language spoken by the people.

“Yet while other nations were without a literature, the intellect of Iceland was in active exercise and works were produced like the EDDAS and HEIMSKRINGLA,—works which, being inspired by a lofty genius, will rank with the writings of HOMER and HERODOTUS while time itself endures.”

Says SIR EDMUND HEAD, in regard to the Norwegian literature of the *twelfth* century: “No doubt there were translations in Anglo-Saxon from the Latin, by Alfred,