

Certain accounts of the intercourse maintained between the extreme north of Europe, or between Greenland and Iceland with the American Continent, properly so called, do not extend beyond the fourteenth century. In the year 1347, a ship was sent from Greenland to Markland (Nova Scotia) to collect building timber and other necessary articles. On the return voyage the ship encountered heavy storms, and was obliged to take refuge at Straumfjord in the west of Iceland. These are the latest accounts preserved to us by ancient Scandinavian authorities of the visits of Northmen to America.*

We have hitherto kept strictly on historical ground. By means of the critical and highly praiseworthy efforts of Christian Rafn, and of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquities at Copenhagen, the sagas and narratives of the voyages of the Northmen to Helluland (Newfoundland), to Markland (the mouth of the St. Lawrence and Nova Scotia), and to Vinland (Massachusetts), have been separately printed, accompanied

*and, Hvitramannaland, Greenland, und Vinland, s. 117-121). According to a very ancient saga, the most northern part of the east coast of Greenland was also visited in 1194, under the name of Svalbard, at a part which corresponds to Scoresby's Land, near the point 73° 16', where my friend Col., then Capt. Sabine, made his pendulum observations, and where there is a very dreary cape bearing my name. (Rafn, *Antiquit. Amer.*, p. 303, and *Aperçu de l'Ancienne Géographie des Régions Arctiques de l'Amerique*, 1847, p. 6.)*

* *Wilhelmi, op. cit.*, s. 226; Rafn, *Antiquit. Amer.*, p. 264 and 453. The settlements on the west coast of Greenland, which, until the middle of the fourteenth century, were in a very flourishing condition, fell gradually to decay, from the ruinous operation of commercial monopolies, from the attacks of Esquimaux (Skralinger), the "black death," which, according to Hecker, depopulated the north during the years 1347 to 1351, and from the invasion of a hostile fleet, regarding whose course nothing is known. At the present day no faith is any longer attached to the meteorological myth of a sudden alteration of climate, and of the formation of a barrier of ice, which was immediately followed by the entire separation from their mother country of the colonies established in Greenland. As these colonies were only on the more temperate district of the west coast of Greenland, it can not be possible that a bishop of Skalholt, in 1540, should have seen "shepherds feeding their flocks" on the east coast of Greenland, beyond the icy wall. The accumulation of masses of ice on the east coast opposite to Iceland depends on the configuration of the land, the neighborhood of a chain of mountains having glaciers and running parallel to the coast line, and on the direction of the oceanic current. This state of things can not be solely referred to the close of the fourteenth or the beginning of the fifteenth century. As Sir John Barrow has very justly shown, it has been subject to many accidental alterations, particularly in the years 1815-1817. (See Barrow, *Voyages of Discovery within the Arctic Regions*, 1846, p. 2-6.) Pope Nicholas V. appointed a bishop for Greenland as late as 1448.