

The important work, *De Mensura Orbis Terræ*, composed by the Irish monk Dicuil about the year 825, and, therefore, thirty-eight years before the Northmen acquired their knowledge of Iceland from Naddod, does not, however, confirm this opinion.

Christian anchorites in the north of Europe, and pious Buddhist monks in the interior of Asia, explored and opened to civilization regions that had previously been inaccessible. The eager striving to diffuse religious opinions has sometimes paved the way for warlike expeditions, and sometimes for the introduction of peaceful ideas and the establishment of relations of commerce. Religious zeal, which so strongly characterizes the doctrines promulgated in the systems of India, Palestine, and Arabia, and which is so widely opposed to the indifference of the ancient polytheistic Greeks and Romans, was the means of furthering the advance of geographical knowledge in the earlier portions of the Middle Ages. Letronne, the commentator on Dicuil, has shown much ingenuity in his attempts to prove that after the Irish missionaries had been driven from the Färoë Islands by the Northmen, they began, about the year 795, to visit Iceland. The Northmen, when they first reached Iceland, found Irish books, mass bells, and other objects, which had been left by the earlier settlers, called *Papar*. These *Papæ*, fathers, are the *Clerici* of Dicuil.* If, as his testimony would lead us to conclude, these objects had belonged to Irish monks, who had come from the Färoë Islands, the question naturally arises, why these monks (*Papar*) should be termed in the native sagas Westmen (*Vestmenn*), who had "come from the West across the sea? (*Kommir til vestan um haf*)." The deepest obscurity still shrouds every thing connected with the voyage of the Gaelic chief Madoc, son of Owen Guineth, to a great western land in the year 1170, and the connection of this event with the Great Ireland of the Icelandic Saga. In like manner, the race of Celto-Americans, whom credulous travelers have professed to discover in many parts of the United States, have also disappeared since the establishment of an earnest and scientific ethnology, based, not on accidental similarities of sounds, but on grammatical forms and organic structure.†

* Letronne, *Recherches Géogr. et Crit. sur le Livre "de Mensura Orbis Terræ,"* composé en Irlande, par Dicuil, 1814, p. 129-146. Compare my *Examen Crit. de l'Hist. de la Géogr.*, t. ii., p. 87-91.

† The statements which have been advanced from the time of Raleigh, of natives of Virginia speaking pure Celtic; of the supposition of the