

THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA.

The Runic Inscription—Chronological Record. WASHINGTON, D. C., July 31. To the Editor of the Evening Telegraph—

Having seen in your paper a notice of the inscription said to have been found by Professor Rafnsson, near the Great Falls of the Potomac, I send you an abstract of the statements heretofore made in support of the theory that this continent was discovered by the Northmen before the days of Columbus, in the form of a brief chronological outline of all the leading facts which have appeared in print on the subject. Very respectfully, etc., THOMAS NORTON.

The reported discovery near the city of Washington, at the head of navigation in the Potomac river, of a Runic inscription, bearing date 1051, and of human remains, trinkets, Roman coins of the tenth century, in the place indicated by the epigraph, has fixed the attention of the public upon an obscure but most important page of the history of the continent of America, its first discovery by Europeans. The authenticity of this inscription is not prepared to question; it may have been engraved, as it purports to have been, in the eleventh century, or it may have been carved there, as is the opinion of many, by W. Langley, whose name, with the date 1761, appears in close connection, or, possibly, it may have been put there in very recent times, but with what object other than a most complicated hoax, it is not yet determined. Let it be as it will, however, a true or false inscription, the interest it has excited, and the speculation it has elicited, fully warrant the labor of the historian and the archaeologist to ascertain its probability or plausibility.

With this view of the matter, and in order to facilitate research, to connect the whole subject in an article that can be surveyed at a glance, as well as to present to the less favored reader a summary of the facts the Hvidserk inscription so intimately connected with, or based upon, I have prepared the following chronology of the most important events preceding and following the discovery of America by the Irish, and the Danes, and Norwegians, which, if true, will be acceptable to your readers. The statements are taken, but with one or two noted exceptions, from the sacred records of the Bible, and from other literary and religious documents, the character of all which is in the main unimpeached, though the details are matters of some dispute. Appended to the chronology I have also made a catalogue of the principal works accessible in this country on the subject of its discovery by the Northmen, by which the following may be verified, or extended to a great degree.

745 A. D.—The Faroe Islands visited by Irish ecclesiastics. 795—Iceland discovered and occupied by Irish monks. The strongest testimony on these two points is given by Dicuil, in a work entitled "De Mensura orbis Terrarum." 800—Iceland visited by Gardar, a Dane of Swedish descent, and called by him Gardarsholm, Gardar's Island. 864—Iceland visited by Nadodd, and called Snealand, Snowland. 874—Iceland colonized by Ingolf, a Norwegian. See Gronland's "Historiske Minnesmerker," p. 92-97.

875—Probable date of the discovery of America by the Irish. The new-found land called Hytrvanaland, White Man's Land, Man's Land, or Ireland in Mikla, Great Ireland. "Professor Rafn is of opinion that the White Man's Land of the Northmen was the country situated to the south of Chesapeake Bay, including North and South Carolina, Georgia, and East Florida, a fact which is remarkable tradition is stated to be preserved amongst the Shawnee Indians, who emigrated eighty-seven years ago from West Florida to Ohio, that Florida was once inhabited by white men, who used iron instruments." "Archaeologia Americana," p. 271-4. A German writer also mentions an old tradition of the ancestors of the Shawnee having come from beyond the sea."—Beaman, p. 209.

882—Greenland discovered by Erik, an outlandish merchant, who had set out in search of the land Ulf Krage's son Gudbrand saw when he was driven out to the westward in the sea, the time when he found the rocks of Gunbora. Erik called the land which he had found Greenland, because, said he, "people will be attracted thither if the land has a good name." 983—Ari Marson sojourns in Hytrvanaland, or the Southern States of America. "From thence could Ari not get away, and was there baptized." 985—Final settlement by Erik and his followers in Greenland. 986—The coast of North America unquestionably discovered by Bjorn Herjulfson in his search for Greenland, with no other results. 994—Bjorn Herjulfson visits Erik Jarl, tells of his voyage to America, and is reproached for not examining the country. Leif Erikson resolves to explore the land, and buys Bjorn's rhip. He is met by a fall from his horse. Leif, however, sets sail with thirty-five men. They find the land first which Bjorn found last, Newfoundland, which they call Helluland. They put to sea and find another land, Nova Scotia, to which Leif gives the name of Markland. Again they put to sea and come to an island, which appears to have been Nantucket. They cross the mouth of Buzzard's Bay, and sail up the Potomac river to Mount Hope Bay, where they resolve to winter. A German, Tjorn, is missing, but he is met by a party sent in search for him, in a state of great excitement from the discovery of vines. The settlers gather grapes and fill trees to load the ships. Leif names the country Vinland, and returns to Greenland in the spring. 999—Voyage of Bjorn Asbrandson to the Western Hemisphere, and settlement in Great Ireland. 1000—Christianity introduced into Iceland. 1002—Thorvald takes his brother Leif's ship to Greenland, and thence to America. He sees canoes on the beach, and afterwards finds nine men, and kills eight of them. The new comers are attacked by the Skrælings, or natives, and Thorvald is killed. He is buried at Krossness, supposed to be Point Alderton. His followers return to Greenland. 1005—Thorstein marries Gudrid, the daughter of Thorvald. He is driven about the whole summer, and returns to Greenland. Attacked by a pestilential disease, Thorstein and Erikson die. Gudrid repairs to Lief in Brattahlid. 1006—Thorfinn Karlefnar arrives in Greenland, and obtains land in marriage. 1007—Expedition to land, and settlement in, Vinland by Thorfinn Karlefnar, with one hundred and sixty men. They visit Helluland, Markland, and Keenness (where Thorvald's ship had her keel broken), and give the name of Furduland to the shores of Barnstable. They visit also Straumfjord and Straumey, or Buzzard's Bay, and Martha's Vinyard, and winter in Straumfjord. In this year Snorri Thorfinnson, the son of Thorfinn Karlefnar, by friend, was born in Vinland, in the State of Massachusetts, being the first European blood of whose birth in America we have any record. 1008—Thorfinn passes on to Hop, or Rhode Island, and winters there. 1009—Thorfinn encounters the natives and, after a brief struggle, kills them. Returns to Straumfjord, and sails along the eastern coast. 1010—Thorfinn returns to Greenland, taking two native women with him. The Dahton Writing Book, on Taunton river, Massachusetts, relates to this memorable sojourn in America. 1018—Freydis, the daughter of Erik, induces the brothers Helgi and Einar to undertake a voyage to Vinland with her. They winter in Vinland. Freydis, by her stratagems, induces a raid, which results in a bloody massacre. The survivors return to Greenland in the spring. 1029—Gudleif Gudlaugsson sails to Greenland, and finds Bjorn Asbrandson, who has sailed from Iceland to the Bay of Providence. Returns to Iceland with presents from Bjorn, the chaplain of Breidavik, to his friends. 1061—Expedition of Herwardur along the

coast of America to the south and west of Vinland, where they had wintered. Date of the Hvidserk inscription, recording the burial of Snorri, an illegitimate daughter of Snorri Thorfinn, and a distinguished character in the account of Herwardur's expedition, reported to have been discovered on the 28th of June, 1867, on the Arrowhead Rock, on the Potomac river, two miles below the Great Falls, and thirteen above the city of Washington. 1121—Erik, Bishop of Greenland, sought Vinland, but without success. 1285—Adalbrand and Thorvald, the sons of Helpe, find a new land west of Iceland. The Faroe Islands, probably the Penguin and Bacon Islands, on the northeast corner of America, discovered. 1288—Rolf is sent by King Erik to seek out the new land. 1290—Rolf travels through Iceland, and calls out men for a voyage to the new land. 1295—Landa-Rolf dies. 1347—A ship, with eighteen men on board, comes to Iceland from Greenland, which had sailed to Markland. 1349 (or, according to others, 1379).—The western settlement of Greenland is attacked by the Esquimaux, and eighteen Greenlanders of Icelandic descent are killed, and two boys carried off prisoners. 1400.—An Irca, or Erlide Andreasson, appointed Bishop of Greenland, goes latter and returns before 1409. After this period all communication between Greenland and the rest of the Danish territory, and consequently between Greenland and America, appears to have ceased, for Queen Margaret of Denmark, and King Erik of Norway, forbade their subjects to trade to the country. The war which then raged in the north of Europe also prevented vessels from visiting the coast, and thus no knowledge of the colony could be obtained. 1433.—A treaty made between England and Denmark contains the conditions that "whatever people have been carried from Iceland, Finmark, Helzealand, and other places, his Majesty of England shall provide, etc., that they be released." In the same year Pope Eugenius IV nominated one Bartholomew to the bishopric of Greenland. 1448.—A letter from Pope Nicholas V. to the bishops of England and Holm, written in this year, gives an account of the fate of the settlers of Greenland. 1477.—Columbus visits Iceland to examine the records of the early Icelandic voyages to unknown lands in the far west, for confirmation of his idea that land—as he believed—could be found by sailing continually to the West. 1492.—Columbus discovers the West Indies, and not the East Indies, as he expected. 1523.—Erik Walchendorf, Archbishop of Thronhold, erected by an ancient chart of the Spaniards, proposed to Christian II, an expedition to Greenland, which was rejected. 1569.—Christian III removes the prohibition established by Queen Margaret, against trading to Greenland, and sends out ships to explore the country, but without success; several attempts are made in the succeeding reigns down to that of Frederik III, in 1670, with similar results. 1578.—Sir Erlend Thorsson, a priest in Iceland, still in possession of an ancient chart of Hytrvanaland, White Man's Land, or Great Ireland, together with the boundaries of Markland, Einfotingsland, little Helluland, and Greenland, of which no further information has been obtained. 1680.—First examination made of the celebrated Dighton Writing Rock in Massachusetts. This Runic inscription contains various cryptographs and rude combinations of figures illustrative of the settlements of the Northmen, among which devices may yet be traced the name of Thorfinn, and some figures corresponding to the number of his associates. It was deciphered in the present century by Professors Finn, Magnusen, and Einar. 1681.—Pastor of Vaar, Norway, succeeds in planting a new colony in Greenland, which has continued to the present day. 1830.—Committee appointed by the Rhode Island Historical Society examines and reports upon the Dighton Writing Rock. 1863.—The Skalhott saga, bearing date 1117, giving an account of the expedition of Herwardur, examined at Skalhott, Iceland. 1867, June 28.—The reported discoveries below the Great Falls of the Potomac river made by Professor Thomas C. Rafnsson, of Copenhagen.

The works which may be consulted with reference to the discovery of America by the Northmen, previous to the landing of Columbus, are the following, many or all of which are to be found in any of the principal libraries of the United States:—Antiquitates Americanae, sive Scriptores Septentrionales rerum Antico-Columbarum in America. 4to. Hafnæ, 1837. Archaeologia Americana. Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society. 3 vols. 8vo. Worcester, 1820, and Cambridge, 1836. Beaman, North Ludlow. Discovery of America by the Northmen in the tenth century, with notices of the early settlements of the Irish in the Western Hemisphere. 8vo. London, 1841. Davis, A. G.—Discovery of America by the Northmen Five Hundred Years before Columbus. 8vo. Boston, 1844. Engel, Samuel J.—Essai sur cette question: quand et comment l'Amérique a été découverte par les Européens. 2 vols. in 2. 12mo. Amsterdam, 1767. Horn, George.—De Originibus Americanis Libri IV. 12mo. Hæge Comitibus, 1652. Kohl, T. G.—Popular History of the Discovery of America, from Columbus to Franklin. Translated by R. B. Noel. 2 vols. 12mo. London, 1862. Murray, Sir Thomas.—The Shalott Saga, in the original Latin, and translated into English, with notes, etc. 8vo. London, 1865. Rafn, Carl Christian.—America discovered in the Tenth Century. 8vo. New York, 1838. —Mémorial sur la Découverte de l'Amérique au Dixième Siècle. Traité de l'Allemand, par X. Marmier. 8vo. Paris, 1838. Smith, Joshua Toussaint.—The discovery of America by the Northmen in the Tenth Century; comprising translations of all the most important original narratives of this event. 24 ed. 12mo. London, 1842.

In conclusion, let me say that, having examined most of these works myself with reference to the Hvidserk Runic inscription of the Potomac, I was astonished to find the most complicated dovetailing between the two, going to show if the latter is a genuine Runic inscription, the truth of both, or, if the Hvidserk inscription is a forgery, the most consummate liguency on the part of its unknown author.

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Holders will address their proposals to the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and endorsed "PROPOSALS FOR THE REDEMPTION OF LOANS OF 1868."
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They may be converted into FIVE-TWENTIES without delay, by applying to
WM. PAINTER & CO.,
Dealers in Government Securities,
222 NO. 25 SOUTH THIRD STREET.

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JAY COOKE & CO.
222 and 224 So. THIRD ST. PHILAD'A.
Dealers in all Government Securities.
OLD 5-20s WANTED
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