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# CHAPTER I.

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# THE LAND AND THE NATIVE RACES.

## 1. References.

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## 2. Physical Characteristics of North America.

Whence came the native races of America? Doubtless the chain of Aleutian islands served as stepping-stones for straggling bands of Asiatics to cross over into continental Alaska many centuries ago; others may have traversed the ice-bridge of Bering's Strait; possibly prehistoric vessels from China, Japan, or the Malay peninsula were blown upon our shores by westerly hurricanes, or drifted hither upon the ocean currents of the Pacific. There are striking similarities between the flora on each shore of the North Pacific; and the Eskimos of North America, like the West-Slope Indians of South America, have been thought to exhibit physical resemblances to the Mongols and Malays. |a mere matter of conjecture. | On the other hand, some archæologists hold that men as far advanced as the present Eskimos followed the retreating ice-cap of the last glacial epoch. In the absence of positive historical evidence, the origin of the native peoples of America is a mere matter of conjecture.

*Origin of the native races,*

North America could not, in a primitive stage of the mechanic arts, have been developed by colonization on any considerable scale from the west, except in the face of difficulties almost insuperable. The Pacific coast of the country is dangerous to approach; steep precipices frequently come down to the shore, and the land everywhere rises rapidly from the sea, until not far inland the broad and mighty wall of the Cordilleran mountain system extends from north to south. That formidable barrier was not scaled by civilized men until modern times, when European settlement had already reached the Mississippi

*Difficulties of colonization from the west.*

from the east, and science had stepped in to assist the explorers. At San Diego and San Francisco are the only natural harbors, although Puget Sound can be entered from the extreme north, and skilful improvements have in our day made a good harbor at the mouth of Columbia River. The rivers of the Pacific Slope for the most part come noisily tumbling down to the sea over great cliffs and through deep chasms, and cannot be utilized for progress far into the interior.

*The Atlantic seaboard the natural approach to North America.*

The Atlantic seaboard, upon the other hand, is broad and inviting. The Appalachian range lies for the most part nearly a hundred miles inland. The gently sloping coast abounds in indentations,—safe harbors and generous land-locked bays, into which flow numerous rivers of considerable breadth and depth, by means of which the land can be explored for long distances from tide-water. By ascending the St. Lawrence and the chain of the Great Lakes, the interior of the continent is readily reached. Dragging his craft over any one of a half-dozen easy portages in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, or Ohio, the canoe traveller can emerge into the Mississippi basin, by means of whose far-stretching waters he is enabled to explore the heart of the New World, from the Alleghanies to the Rockies, from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. |The river system.| A carrying trail, at the headwaters of the Missouri, will lead him over to tributaries of the Columbia, whereby he gains access to the Pacific slope; while by another portage of a few miles in length, from Pigeon River to Rainy River, he is given command of the vast basin of

Hudson Bay,—a labyrinth of waterways extending northward to the Arctic Ocean, and connected by still other portages with the Pacific. The Hudson River and Lakes George and Champlain form a natural highway from the St. Lawrence southward to the ocean. By the Mohawk and a short carrying-place, the Hudson was from early times connected with the Great Lakes. The Potomac, the Susquehanna, the Roanoke, and other Southern rivers can be traced northwestward to their sources in the mountains; and hard by are the headwaters of west-flowing feeders of the Mississippi. |The Appalachian valley system.| The Appalachian mountains run for the most part in parallel ridges northeast and southwest; and their valley system, opening out through the Cumberland Gap upon the Kentucky prairies and the valleys of the Ohio basin, also affords a comparatively easy highway from the Atlantic sea-coast to the interior.

Thus with the entrance of North America facing the east, and with Europe lying but little more than one half the distance from Boston that Asia lies from San Francisco, it was in the order of things that from the east should have come the people who were to settle and civilize the New World. Colonists could on this side of the continent found new commonwealths, yet at the same time easily maintain their connection with the fatherland. |An inviting field for Aryan colonization.| The march of Aryan emigration has ever been on lines little diverging from due east or west. It is fortunate that the geographical conditions of North America were such as to make her an inviting field for the further migration of the race.

*Geographical characteristics of New England;*

The Atlantic border may be considered as the threshold of the continent. It was among its dense, gloomy forests of hard wood and pine that European nations planted their colonies; here those colonies grew into States, which were the nucleus of the American Union. The Appalachians are not high enough seriously to affect the climate or landscape of the region. Their flanks slope gradually down to the sea, furrowed by rivers which from the first gave character to the colonies.In New England, where there is an abundance of good harbors, the coast is narrow and the streams are short and rapid, with stretches of navigable water between the waterfalls which turn the wheels of industry for a busy, ingenious, and thrifty people. |and of the South.| The long, broad rivers of the South, flowing lazily through a wide base-plain, the coast of which furnishes but little safe anchorage, served as avenues of traffic for the large, isolated colonial estates strung along their banks; the autocratic planters taking pleasure in having ports of entry at their doors. |Three grand natural divisions of the Atlantic slope.| The Hudson and the Potomac lead far inland,—paths to the water ways of the interior,—and divide the Atlantic slope into three grand natural divisions, the New England, the Middle, and the Southern, in which grew up distinct groups of colonies, having quite a different origin, and for a time but few interests in common. |Extractive industries.| The Appalachian mountains and their foot-hills abound in many places in iron and coal; works for the smelting of the former were erected near Jamestown, Virginia, as early as 1620, and early in the eighteenth

century the industry began to be of considerable importance in parts of New England, New York, and New Jersey; but the mining of anthracite coal was not commenced until 1820. |Soil.| The soil of the Atlantic border varies greatly, being much less fertile in the North than in the South; but nearly everywhere it yields good returns for a proper expenditure of labor. |Climate.| The climate is subject to frequent and extreme changes. At about 30° latitude the mean temperature is similar to that on the opposite side of the Atlantic; but farther north the American climate, owing to the divergence of the Gulf Stream and the influence of the great continent to the west, is much colder than at corresponding points in Europe. The rainfall along the coast is everywhere sufficient.

*The Mississippi basin.*

Beyond the Appalachian mountain wall, the once heavily forested land dips gently to the Mississippi; then the land rises again, in a long, treeless swell, up to the foot of the giant and picturesque Cordilleras. The isothermal lines in this great central basin are nearly identical with those of the Atlantic coast. The soil east of the 105th meridian west from Greenwich is generally rich, sometimes extremely fertile; and it is now agreed that nearly all the vast arid plains to the west of that meridian, formerly set down as desert, needs only irrigation to blossom as the rose. |The Pacific slope.| The Pacific slope, narrow and abrupt, abounds in fertile, pent-up valleys, with some of the finest scenery on the continent and a climate everywhere nearly equal at the same elevation; the isothermal lines here run north and

south, the lofty mountain range materially influencing both climate and vegetation.

*Summary.*

There is no fairer land for the building of a great nation. The region occupied by the United States is particularly available for such a purpose. It offers a wide range of diversity in climate and products, yet is traversed by noble rivers which intimately connect the North with the South, and have been made to bind the East with the West. It possesses in the Mississippi basin vast plains unsurpassed for health, fertility, and the capacity to support an enormous population, yet easily defended; for the great outlying mountain ranges, while readily penetrated by bands of adventurous pioneers, and though climbed by railway trains, might easily be made serious obstacles to invading armies. The natural resources of North America are apparently exhaustless; we command nearly every North American seaport on both oceans, and withal are so isolated that there appears to be no necessity for "entangling alliances" with transatlantic powers. The United States seems permitted by Nature to work out her own destiny unhampered by foreign influence, secure in her position, rich in capabilities. Her land is doubtless destined to become the greatest stronghold of the Aryan race.

### 3. The Native Races.

*The aborigines.*

When Europeans first set foot upon the shores of America it was found not only that a New World had been discovered, but that it was peopled by a race of men theretofore unknown to civilized experience. The various branches of the race differed greatly from each other in general appearance and in

degrees of civilization, and to some extent were settled in latitudinal strata; thus the reports concerning them made by early navigators who touched at different points along the coast, led to much confusion in European estimates of the aborigines. |Divisible into two divisions.| We now know that but one race occupied the land from Hudson Bay to Patagonia. Leaving out of account the Carib race of the West Indies, the portion resident in North and Central America may be roughly grouped into two grand divisions:—

*Mexicans, Peruvians, Pueblos, Cliff-Dwellers, and Indians of the lower Mississippi valley.*

I. The semi-civilized peoples represented by the sun-worshipping Mexicans and Peruvians, who had attained particular efficiency in architecture, road-making, and fortification, acquired some knowledge of astronomy, were facile if not elegant in sculpture, practised many handicrafts, but appear to have exhibited little capacity for further progress. Their government was paternal to a degree nowhere else observed, and the people, exercising neither political power nor individual judgment in the conduct of many of the common affairs of life, were helpless when deprived of their native rulers by the Spanish conquerors, Cortez and Pizarro. Closely upon the border of this division, both geographically and in point of mental status, were the Pueblos and Cliff-Dwellers of New Mexico, Arizona, and Southern California,—the occupants of the country around the headwaters of the Rio Grande and Gila rivers, and of the foot-hills of the Desert Range. These people, like the Mexicans, lived in great communal dwellings of stone or sun-dried brick, and were also sun-worshippers.

They made crude cloth and pottery, and irrigated and cultivated large tracts of arid land, but were inferior as fighters, and occupied a mental plane considerably below the Mexicans. Allied in race and similar in acquirements were the tribes inhabiting the lower Mississippi valley, the Natchez and perhaps other tribes lying farther to the east.

*The Red Indians of North America.*

II. The natives of North America, called Red Indians,—a name which perpetuates the geographical error of Columbus, and has given rise to an erroneous opinion as to their color—occupied a still lower plane of civilization. Yet one must be cautious in accepting any hard-and-fast classification. The North Americans presented a considerable variety of types, ranging from the Southern Indians, some of whose tribes were rather above the Caribs in material advancement, and quite superior to them in mental calibre, down to the Diggers, the savage root-eaters of the Cordilleran region.

The migrations of some of the Red Indian tribes were frequent, and they occupied overlapping territories, so that it is impossible to fix the tribal boundaries with any degree of exactness. Again, the tribes were so merged by intermarriage, by affiliation, by consolidation, by the fact that there were numerous polyglot villages of renegades, by similarities in manner, habits, and appearance, that it is difficult even to separate the savages into families. |Philological divisions of Red Indian tribes.| It is only on philological grounds that these divisions can be made at all. In a general way we may say that between the Atlantic and the Rockies, Hudson Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, there were

four Indian languages in vogue, with great varieties of local dialect.

I. The Algonquians were the most numerous, holding the greater portion of the country from the unoccupied "debatable land" of Kentucky northward to Hudson Bay, and from the Atlantic westward to the Mississippi. Among their tribes were the Narragansetts and Mohicans. These savages were rude in life and manners, were intensely warlike, depended for subsistence chiefly on hunting and fishing, lived in rude wigwams covered with bark, skins, or matted reeds, practised agriculture in a crude fashion, and were less stable in their habitations than the Southern Indians. They have made a larger figure in our history than any other family, because through their lands came the heaviest and most aggressive movement of white population. Estimates of early Indian populations necessarily differ, in the absence of accurate knowledge, but it is now known that the numbers were never so great as was at first estimated. The colonists on the Atlantic seaboard found a native population much larger than elsewhere existed, for the Indians had a superstitious, almost a romantic, attachment to the seaside; and fish-food abounded there. Back from the waterfalls on the Atlantic slope,—in the mountains and beyond,—there were large areas destitute of inhabitants; and even in the nominally occupied territory the villages were generally small and far apart. A careful modern estimate is that the Algonkins at no time numbered over ninety thousand souls, and possibly not over fifty thousand.

*The Algonquians.*

*The Iroquois.*

II. In the heart of this Algonquian land was planted an ethnic group called the Iroquois, with its several distinct branches, often at war with each other. The craftiest, most daring, and most intelligent of Red Indians, yet still in the savage hunter state, the Iroquois were the terror of every native band east of the Mississippi, and eventually pitted themselves against their white neighbors. The five principal tribes of this family—Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas, all stationed in pallisaded villages south and east of Lakes Erie and Ontario—formed a loose confederacy, styled by themselves "The Long House," and by the whites "The Five Nations," which firmly held the waterways connecting the Hudson River and the Great Lakes. The population of the entire group was not over seventeen thousand,—a remarkably small number, considering the active part they played in American history, and the control which they exercised over wide tracts of Algonquian territory. Later they were joined by the Tuscaroras from North Carolina, and the confederacy was thereafter known as "The Six Nations."

*The Southern Indians.*

III. The Southern Indians occupied the country between the Tennessee River and the Gulf, the Appalachian ranges and the Mississippi. They were divided into five lax confederacies,—the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. Of a milder disposition than their Northern cousins, they were rather in a barbarous than a savage state. The Creeks, in particular, had good intellects, were fair agriculturists, and quickly adopted many mechanic and rural arts from their white neighbors; so that by the time of

the Revolution they were not far behind the small white proprietors in industrial or domestic methods. In the Indian Territory of to-day the descendants of some of these Southern Indians are good farmers and herdsmen, with a capacity for self-government and shrewd business dealing. It is not thought that the Southern tribes ever numbered above fifty thousand persons.

*The Dakotahs.*

IV. The Dakotah, or Sioux, family occupied for the most part the country beyond the Mississippi. They were and are a fierce, high-strung people, are genuine nomads, and war appears to have been their chief occupation. Before the advent of the Spaniards they were foot-wanderers; but runaway horses came to them from Mexico and from the exploring expeditions of Narvaez, Coronado, and De Soto, and very early in the historic period the Indians of the far western plains became expert horsemen, attaining a degree of equestrian skill equal to that of the desert-dwelling Arabs. Outlying bands of the Dakotahs once occupied the greater part of Wisconsin and northern Illinois, and were, it is believed by competent investigators, one of the various tribes of mound-builders. Upon withdrawing to the west of the Mississippi, they left behind them one of their tribes,—the Winnebagoes,—whom Nicolet found (1634) resident on and about Green Bay of Lake Michigan, at peace and in confederacy with the Algonquians, who hedged them about. Other trans-Mississippi nations there are, but they are neither as large nor of such historical importance as the Dakotahs.

The above enumeration, covering the territory south of Hudson Bay and east of the Rocky Mountains, embraces those savage nations with which the white colonists of North America have longest been in contact. |Other tribes.| North and west of these limits were and are other aboriginal tribes of the same race, but materially differing from those to whom allusion has been made, as well as from each other, in speech, stature, feature, and custom. These, too, lie, generally speaking, in ethnological zones. North of British Columbia are the fish-eating and filthy Hyperboreans, including the Eskimos and the tribes of Alaska and the British Northwest. South of these dwell the Columbians,—the aborigines of Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia,—a somewhat higher type than the Hyperboreans, but much degenerated from contact with whites. The Californians are settled not only in what is now termed California, but stretch back irregularly into the mountains of Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, and Utah.

### 4. Characteristics of the Indian.

But of all the North American tribes, our interest in this book is with the traditional Red Indian,—the savage of eastern North America, the crafty forest warrior whom our fathers met on landing, and whose presence so materially shaped the fortunes of the colonies.

*The Indian as a hunter and fisher.*

First of all, the Indian was a hunter and fisherman. As such, his life was a struggle for existence. Enemies were to be driven from the tribe's hunting-grounds, but the game-preserves of other tribes were invaded when convenient, and this led to endless feuds. War was not only

a pastime, but a necessity in the competition for food. Villages were as a consequence almost invariably built at vantage points,—at inlets of the sea, at waterfalls, on commanding banks of lakes and rivers, on portage paths between the headwaters of streams, and at river junctions. Hence we find that many, if not most, of the early white towns, built before railways were introduced, are on sites originally occupied by Indian villages.

*Political organization.*

The political organization of the Indians was weak. The villages were little democracies, where one warrior held himself as good as another, except for the deference naturally due to headmen of the several clans, or to those of reputed wisdom or oratorical ability. There was a sachem, or peace-chief, hereditary in the female line, whose authority was but slight, unless aided by natural gifts which commanded respect. In times of war the fighting men ranged themselves as volunteers under some popular leader,—perhaps a permanent chief; sometimes a warrior without titular distinction. Much which appears in the early writings about the power and authority of "nobles," "kings," and "emperors" among the red men was fanciful, the authors falling into the error of judging Indian institutions by Old World standards. Around the village council-fires all warriors had a right to be heard; but the talking was chiefly done by the privileged classes of headmen, old men, wise men, and orators, who were also selected as the representatives of villages in the occasional deliberative assemblies of the tribe or confederacy. The judgment of such a council could not bind the entire village, tribe, or

confederacy; any one might refuse to obey if it pleased him. It was seldom that an entire tribe united in an important enterprise, still more unusual for several tribes to stand by each other in adversity. It was this weakness in organization, —inherent in a pure democracy,—combined with their lack of self-control and steadfastness of purpose, and with the ever-prevailing tribal jealousies, which caused Indians to yield before the whites, who better understood the value of adherence in the face of a common foe. Here and there in our history we shall note some formidable Indian conspiracies for entirely dispossessing the whites,—such as the Virginia scheme (1622), King Philip's uprising (1675), and the Pontiac War (1763). They were the work of native men of genius who had the gift of organization highly developed, but who could not find material equal to their skill; hence these uprisings were short-lived.

*The Indian as a fighter.*

The strength of the Indian as a fighter lay in his capacity for stratagem, in his ability to thread the tangled thicket as silently and easily as he would an open plain, in his powers of secrecy, and in his habit of making rapid, unexpected sallies for robbery and murder, and then gliding back into the dark and almost impenetrable forest. The child of impulse, he soon tired of protracted military operations; and in a siege or in the open usually yielded to stoutly sustained resistance on the part of an enemy inferior in numbers. But the colonists were obliged to learn and adopt the Indian's skulking method of warfare before they could successfully cope with him in the forest.

The Indian was lord of his own wigwam and of the squaws, whom he purchased of their fathers, kept as his slaves, and could divorce at his caprice. Families were not large, chiefly owing to the lack of food and to heavy infant mortality. The wigwams, or huts,—each tribe having peculiarities in its domestic architecture,—were foully kept, and the bodies of their dirty inhabitants swarmed with vermin. Kind and hospitable to friends and unsuspected strangers, the Indian was merciless to his enemies, no cruelty being too severe for a captive. Yet prisoners were often snatched from the stake or the hands of a vindictive captor to be adopted into the family of the rescuer, taking the place of some one slaughtered by the enemy. In council and when among strangers, the Indian was dignified and reserved, too proud to exhibit curiosity or emotion; but around his own fire he was often a jolly clown, much given to verbosity, and fond of comic tales of doubtful morality. Improvidence was one of his besetting sins. *Social characteristics.*

The summer dress of the men was generally a short apron made of the pelt of a wild animal, the women being clothed in skins from neck to knees; in winter both sexes wrapped themselves in large robes of similar material. Indian oratory was highly ornate; it abounded in metaphors drawn from a minute observance of nature and from a picturesque mythology. |Religion.| A belief in the efficacy of religious observances was deep seated. Long fastings, penances, and sacrifices were frequent. The elements were peopled with spirits good and bad. Every animal, every plant, had its manitou, or incarnate spirit. *Dress.*

Fancy ran riot in superstition. Even the dances practised by the aborigines had a certain religious significance, being pantomimes, and in some features resembling the mediæval miracle-plays of Europe. |Medicine.| The art of healing was tinctured with necromancy, although there was considerable virtue in their decoctions of barks, roots, and herbs, and their vapor-baths, which came in time to be borrowed from them by the whites.

*Intellectual status.*

In intellectual activity the red man did not occupy so low a scale as has often been assigned him. He was barbarous in his habits, but was so from choice: it suited his wild, untrammelled nature. He understood the arts of politeness when he chose to exercise them. He could plan, he was an incomparable tactician and a fair strategist; he was a natural logician; his tools and implements were admirably adapted to the purpose designed; he fashioned boats that have not been surpassed in their kind; he was remarkably quick in learning the use of firearms, and soon equalled the best white hunters as a marksman. A rude sense of honor was highly developed in the Indian; he had a nice perception of public propriety; he bowed his will to the force of custom,—these characteristics doing much to counteract the anarchical tendency of his extreme democracy. He understood the value of form and color, as witness his rock-carvings, his rude paintings, the decorations on his finely tanned leather, and his often graceful body markings. It was because the savage saw little in civilized ideas to attract him, that he either remained obdurate in the face of

missionary endeavors, or simulated an interest he could not feel.

### 5. Relations of the Indians and Colonists.

*The Indians and the colonists.*

The colonists from Europe met the Red Indian in a threefold capacity,—as a neighbor, as a customer and trader, and as a foe opposed to encroachments upon his hunting grounds. At first the whites were regarded by the aborigines as of supernatural origin, and hospitality, veneration, and confidence were displayed toward the new-comers. But the morality of the Europeans was soon made painfully evident to them. |Indians as foes.| When the early Spaniards, and afterwards the English, kidnapped tribesmen to sell them into slavery or to use them as captive guides for future expeditions, or even murdered the natives on slight provocation, distrust and hatred naturally succeeded the sentiment of awe. Like many savage races, like the earlier Romans, the Indian looked upon the member of every tribe with which he had not made a formal peace as a public enemy; hence he felt justified in wreaking his vengeance on the race whenever he failed to find individual offenders. He was exceptionally cruel, his mode of warfare was skulking, he could not easily be got at in the forest fastnesses which he alone knew well, and his strokes fell heaviest on women and children; so that whites came to fear and unspeakably to loathe the savage, and often added greatly to the bitterness of the struggle by retaliation in kind. The white borderers themselves were frequently brutal, reckless, and lawless; and under such conditions clashing was inevitable.

*The fur-trade, and inter-tribal barter.*

But the love of trade was strong among the Indians, and caused them to some extent to overcome or to conceal their antipathies. There had always existed a system of inter-tribal barter, so widespread that the first whites landing on the Atlantic coast saw Indians with copper ornaments and tools which came from the Lake Superior mines; and by the middle of the seventeenth century many articles of European make had passed inland, by means of these forest exchanges, as far as the Mississippi, in advance of the earliest white explorers. The trade with the Indians was one of the incentives to colonization. The introduction of European blankets at once revolutionized the dress of the coast tribes; and it is surprising how quickly the art of using firearms was acquired among them, and barbaric implements and utensils abandoned for those of civilized make. So rapid was this change that it was not long before the Indians became dependent on the whites for nearly every article of dress and ornament, and for tools and weapons. The white traders, who travelled through the woods visiting the tribes, exchanging these goods for furs, often cheated and robbed the Indian, taught him the use of intoxicants, bullied and browbeat him, appropriated his women, and in general introduced serious demoralization into the native camps. Trouble frequently grew out of this wretched condition of affairs. The bulk of the whites doubtless intended to treat the Indian honorably; but the forest traders were beyond the pale of law, and news of the details of their transactions seldom reached the coast settlements.

As a neighbor the Indian was difficult to deal with, whether in the negotiation of treaties of amity, or in the purchase of lands. Having but a loose system of government, there was no really responsible head, and no compact was secure from the interference of malcontents who would not be bound by treaties made by the chiefs. The English felt that the red-men were not putting the land to its full use, that much of the territory was growing up as a waste, that they were best entitled to it who could make it the most productive. On the other hand, the earlier cessions of land were made under a total misconception: the Indians supposed that the new-comers would, after a few years of occupancy, pass on and leave the tract again to the natives. There was no compromise possible between races with precisely opposite views of property in land. |The inevitable struggle for mastery.| The struggle was inevitable,—civilization against savagery. No sentimental notions could prevent it. It was in the nature of things that the weaker must give way. For a long time it was not certain that a combined effort might not drive the whites into the sea and undo the work of colonization; but in the end the savage went to the wall.

*The Indian as a neighbor.*

Taking a general view of the growth of the American nation, it is now easy to see that it was fortunate that Englishmen met in the Indian so formidable an antagonist: such fierce and untamed savages could never be held long as slaves; and thus were the American colonists of the North —the bone and sinew of the nation—saved from the temptations and the moral danger which come from contact

*Good effect of Indian opposition on the colonists.*

with a numerous servile race. Again, every step of progress into the wilderness being stubbornly contested, the spirit of hardihood and bravery—so essential an element in nation-building—was fostered among the borderers; and as settlement moved westward slowly, only so fast as the pressure of population on the seaboard impelled it, the Americans were prevented from planting scattered colonies in the interior, and thus were able to present a solid front to the mother-country when, in due course of time, fostering care changed to a spirit of commercial control, and commercial control to jealous interference and menace.

# CHAPTER II.

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## 7. Pre-Columbian Discoveries.

The Basques, Normans, Welsh, Irish, and Scandinavians are the principal claimants for the honor of discovering America before Columbus; and there are also believers in early African migrations to the western continent, chiefly influenced by supposed ethnological and botanical evidences found in South America. |The Scandinavian claim.| The Scandinavians make out the strongest case. Iceland, so tradition runs, was first conquered by the Britons in the sixth century. Then followed a succession of Danish and Irish settlements. But the Celts were driven out by Ingolf, who led a colony of Norwegians thither in 875 and founded Reikjavik.

The ancient Norse sagas—oral traditions, none of which were fixed in writing until the twelfth century, and most of them not until the fourteenth—mention voyages to the west from Iceland, and the discovery of new lands in that quarter as early as 876. In 985 Eric the Red is said to have led colonies to this western land,—by this time called Greenland. The following year (986) Bjarni Herjulfson claimed to have been driven by contrary winds to a strange shore nine days' sail southwest from Greenland,—"to a land flat and covered with trees." Then comes the familiar story, that in the year 1000 Leif, son of Eric the Red, having come from Norway and introduced Christianity into both Iceland and Greenland, sailed away to the southwest with thirty-five companions, intent on visiting the country which Bjarni had discovered before him. They wintered, so the saga reads, "at a place where a river flowed out from a lake," called the region Vinland because of wild grapes growing there, "erected large buildings," and then set out for Greenland

with a cargo of timber,—a commodity much needed in the fishing colonies of the less-favored North. It is related that other explorations succeeded this, and that in 1007 a temporary settlement was formed in sunny Vinland, where the colonists, nearly one hundred in number, "had all the good things of the country, both of grapes and of all sorts of game and other things." Trading voyages to the new country now became frequent, say the sagas, and considerable shipments of timber were made from Vinland to Greenland. Eric Upsi, a Greenland bishop, is alleged, on doubtful authority, to have gone to Vinland in 1121; and in 1347 there is mention of a Greenland ship sailing out there for a cargo of timber,—but this is the very last reference to Vinland by the Norwegian bards.

An enormous mass of literature has been the outgrowth of these geographical puzzles in the sagas, and many writers have ventured to identify every headland and other natural object mentioned in them. |It is shadowy, but not improbable.| The common theory among the advocates of the Scandinavian claim is, that Vinland was somewhere on the coast south of Labrador; but as to the exact locality, there is much diversity of opinion. There may easily have been early voyages to the American mainland south of Davis Straits by the hardy Norse seamen colonized in Iceland and Greenland, and it is probable that there were numerous adventures of that sort.

The sagas, like the Homeric tales, were oral narrations for centuries before they were committed to writing, and as such were subject to distortion and patriotic and romantic embellishment. It is now difficult to separate in them the

true from the false; yet we have other contemporaneous evidence (Adam of Bremen, 1076) that the Danes regarded Vinland as a reality. Pretended monuments of the early visits of Northmen to our shores have been exhibited,—notably the old mill at Newport and the Dighton Rock; but modern scholarship has determined that these are not relics of the vikings, and had a much less romantic origin. It is now safe to say that nowhere in America, south of undisputed traces in Greenland, are there any convincing archæological proofs of these alleged centuries of Norse occupation in America.

### 8. Early European Discoveries (1492-1512).

But even granting the possibility, and indeed the probability, of pre-Columbian discoveries, they bore no lasting fruit, and are merely the antiquarian puzzles and curiosities of American history. |American development begun with Columbus.| The development of the New World began with the landing (Oct. 12, 1492) on an island in the Bahamas, of Christopher Columbus, the agent of Spain. It was an age of daring maritime adventure. India, whence Europe obtained her gold and silks, her spices, perfumes, and precious stones, was the common goal. For many centuries the great trade route had been by caravans from India overland through Central Asia and the Balkan peninsula to Italy, the Rhine country, the Netherlands, and beyond; but the raids of the fierce desert tribes and the capture of Constantinople (1453) had closed this path, and now the trade passed through Egypt. |The race for India.| With improvements in the art of navigation there arose a general desire to reach India by sea. Three centuries before Christ, Aristotle had taught that the earth was a sphere, and