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fact from which to make our deductions and generalizations. Instead of asking ourselves, "Why is coffee largely grown in Brazil?" we should ask, "How is it that Brazil produces four-fifths of the world's coffee?"

One interesting result would appear in connection with minerals. It is the business of the economic geologist to describe the situation of mineral deposits. It is not his business to consider the relation of these deposits to man—that is the province of the economic geographer—yet we find text-books and atlases failing to do more than repeat the evidence collected by the geologist; they demonstrate a fact in geology, not geography. Provided we discover the places in which minerals are worked, and the relative importance of each place in regard to the other places where the same mineral is worked; provided we substitute for the statement, "Coal is extensively mined in India, Canada, Japan, and Australia," the statement, "Coal is mined to the extent of 1 per cent. of the world's production in India, Japan, Australia, and Canada," we are correctly functioning as geographers. Our business is not the Earth as a planet, but the Earth as the home of man, and our care is not the rocks of the Earth's crust, but the reaction between those rocks and man who turns them to his purposes.

DR. NANSEN ON NORTH POLAR EXPLORATION.*

By Sir CLEMENTS R. MARKHAM, K.C.B., F.R.S.

THE publication of the great work of Sir Fridtjof Nansen is an epoch in the unfolding of Arctic history. His object is "to make clear the main features in the development of the knowledge of the north in early times"; and, as has always been his wont, "when he seriously took the work in hand, the subject monopolized his whole power." Nansen drew the veil from the mystery of Arctic geography; he now draws the veil from the mystery of early Arctic history.

The first information respecting the far north came to the civilized world through the trade in tin and in amber; but it was all vague and misty. The position of the Cassiterides, or tin islands, was and remains uncertain. Nansen is disposed to place them on the south coast of Brittany, on islands where tin occurs. Still less was known about the sources of the amber supply.

Pytheas, the Phocæan Greek of Marseilles, is the very "first who gives firm foothold," in the days of Alexander the Great, about 330 B.C.

I was myself so deeply impressed by the greatness of Pytheas as a scientific geographer and a northern explorer, that I published a monograph on his voyages in our *Journal*, nearly twenty years ago. Nansen

* 'In Northern Mists: Arctic Exploration in Early Times.' By Fridtjof Nansen, G.C.V.O., ETC. 2 vols., pp. 766. W. Heinemann: 1911.

has studied all the authorities on the subject with care and thoroughness, and fully agrees with me. Pytheas, he holds, was an eminent astronomer, and the first to introduce astronomical measurements for ascertaining the geographical positions of places, therefore the first scientific explorer, an intrepid seaman, "and one of the most capable and undaunted discoverers the world has ever seen." Above all, Pytheas was the first to bring authentic information respecting the Arctic regions. Nansen takes him further than I did, believing that he actually made the voyage from the Shetlands to Thule, which is the coast of Norway. He may even have seen the midnight sun, and he received information respecting the ice-floes and the frozen Arctic seas.

Pytheas was the first scientific explorer. Eratosthenes, 150 years later, was the founder of scientific geography, a science with a clearly stated definition now more than 2000 years old. For geography is the mother of all the sciences. Among other achievements, Pytheas was the discoverer of this island of Britain. He had no successor for centuries, but stands alone—the first scientific explorer, the first Arctic discoverer.

There was an expedition towards the north in the time of Augustus, and a voyage of discovery despatched by the great general Agricola. But it was our own King Alfred who first gave a detailed account of part of the Arctic Regions in his edition of Orosius, by recording his conversations with the explorer Ohthere or Ottar. Nansen has found this narrative of the great king very useful. It has enabled him, in his two very interesting chapters on the Finns or Lapps, to compare the prosperous condition of these dwellers on the Arctic threshold in Alfred's time with their present degeneration, due to the curse of modern civilization. In the end of the twelfth century, Spitsbergen appears to have been discovered under the name of "Swabard"; and there is, in one of these Finnish chapters, an account of the maelstrom and of the voyage of Harald Hardrada.

It is strange that the Irish monks, seeking neither fame nor knowledge nor gain, but only solitude, should have preceded the Norsemen in the Færos and in Iceland, but so it was.

"The Norwegians were the first people who definitely abandoned coast sailing, universally practised before their time, taking navigation away from the coast and out on the ocean." This dictum is undeniable, and is one of the glories of the Norwegian people. They crossed the North sea to Britain, Ireland, Orkneys, Shetlands, Færos, and Iceland; and the Atlantic to Greenland and America. Nansen gives good reasons for the belief that their voyages, at least across the North sea, date from a very remote past, certainly from before the time of Pytheas.

An excellent account of the Norse ships, the swift long ships for war, and the broader sailing merchant ships (*bosses* or *knars*), precedes Nansen's account of the Icelandic and Greenland discoveries by the Norsemen. The story of the settlement of Iceland in the ninth century is admirably told, followed by the narrative of Eric Raude's discovery of and settlement

in Greenland, and its success. Settlers followed in his wake until there was a Norse population of nearly 2000, with 280 homesteads and four churches up the deep fjords, sheep and cattle housed in the winter, and a flourishing trade with the mother countries.

Nansen's object, in this part of the work, is to disentangle truth from fiction. He fully accepts the history of the settlement of Eric Raude, and the discovery of America represented by Helluland (Labrador) and Markland (Newfoundland), and he finds evidence that Markland was visited for wood-cutting, occasionally and down to a late period. He records also the approaches to the east coast of Greenland, comparing the descriptions in the sagas of the glaciers reaching to the sea and of the formidable ice-floes, with his own experiences and observations on the same forbidding seas. He tells of the arrival of that famous lady Gudrid with her father, of her marriage with Karlsefne, the knight-errant, and of their departure from Greenland for the discovery of America. Our author might well have inserted the extremely interesting episode of Gudrid and the sorceress, for nowhere throughout the saga literature is there a more graphic and detailed account of a heathen ceremony, with all the local colouring. Nansen also discusses the furthest northern point in Baffin bay reached by the Norsemen, from Staumfjord ($66^{\circ} 30' N.$), or Kroksfjardarhaidr (Disc. $70^{\circ} 30' N.$). That in about 1300 A.D. they had reached $72^{\circ} 55'$ is proved, beyond dispute, by the runic inscription found at Kingigtorsuak. There is also mention of an expedition when the latitude was attempted to be observed by a peculiar method which gives no certain result to us. Nansen is not disposed to concede any very high latitude to the Norsemen in these voyages. I am inclined to be more liberal, and to think that Lancaster sound and even Washington Irving island are not impossible.

All this wonderful story of the settlement of Greenland and discovery of America by the Norsemen is accepted by Nansen as, in the main, historical. He holds the voyage of Erik Raude "to be the most remarkable in the history of Arctic expeditions, both in itself, on account of the masterly ability it shows, and for the vast consequences it was to have."

But legend had been mixed with veracious tradition in the stories handed down to the writers of the sagas who lived three centuries after the events. It required the aid of untiring research and very keen insight to unravel truth from fiction. The story of Wineland the Good, with its vineyards and self-sown wheatfields, could not be accepted, and our author diligently sought an explanation of its presence. The task was a difficult one, and some assistance was obtained from Prof. Moltke Moe, whose profound knowledge of the folklore of the northern countries and varied learning is unsurpassed.

The Wineland story was first received by the historian Adam of Bremen from Svend Estridsen, the King of Denmark, who was famous for his knowledge of Scandinavian traditions. This was in the middle

of the eleventh century. There is evidence that the legend reached Iceland almost as early. Nansen, after much research, found that, in one of the works of St. Isidore, the learned Bishop of Seville in the time of the later Gothic kings of Spain, described the "Fortunate Isles" in the same way as the Icelandic sagamen described Wineland, as a country of vines and self-sown wheatfields. He judged that the coincidence could not be fortuitous. Further research led him to the conclusion that the legend of St. Isidore reached Iceland through the medium of Irish tradition. The "Fortunate Isles" of St. Isidore were the "*Insula uwarum*" in the "Navigatio Sancti Brandani," and the *Brazil* Island or Isle of Happiness of Irish tradition was an idea derived from the Fortunate Isles of St. Isidore, eventually reaching Are Frode and the learned men of Iceland. Nansen adds corroborative evidence, and the whole explanation of the origin of the Wineland legend is elaborated by our author after untiring research and with remarkable literary skill. He has thus separated legend from what may be received as history.

Nansen takes a common-sense view of the decline and final disappearance of the Norse settlements in Greenland. It was not change of climate, for the climate was exactly the same then as it is now. It was not the black death, for there is not an atom of evidence that the disease ever reached Greenland. It was not a war of extermination waged by the Eskimo, for that unwarlike people could not move in large numbers, and, in fact, they had lived side by side with the Norsemen during the whole time. Recent research has established the fact that the Eskimo were in Greenland centuries before the Norsemen arrived. The cause of the disappearance was the falling off and final cessation of communication with Norway. The later kings of that country only allowed one ship to go to Greenland annually, and it was sometimes wrecked. In 1410 communication ceased altogether. By that time many of the settlers had doubtless returned to Norway. The remnant could not keep their cattle and sheep alive. They were finally obliged to adopt the Eskimo mode of life, and became absorbed in them. Their vestiges are numerous, consisting of the sites of their homesteads, a ruin of a large church, two inscribed gravestones, and a few Norse words in the Eskimo language. It was a very melancholy conclusion of a great enterprise.

Nansen sets little store by the sailing directions of Ivar Bardsen, either as regards their authenticity or their accuracy, for only a third-hand version has reached us.

The indefatigable researches of our author has brought to light the fact that there was a correspondence between Alfonso V. of Portugal and Christian I. of Denmark, in which the former advised the Danish king to despatch a voyage of discovery.* In fact, Skipper Didrik Pining, a

* In 1909 a letter from Carsten Grip, of Kiel, to Christian III., dated March 3, 1551, was discovered, in which it is stated that Pining was sent out by Christian I., to make discoveries, at the request of Alfonso V. of Portugal. Both kings died in

great sea captain and pirate, was sent, and probably reached Greenland. This must have been before 1481, the year in which both the kings died.

A very important chapter is devoted to a survey of the knowledge respecting the northern countries during the middle ages, as shown chiefly by maps. It commences with the knowledge acquired by the Arab geographers, in which research Nansen was assisted by Prof. Seippel. A very able review of the information to be gleaned from the maps of the middle ages follows. Our countryman, Nicholas of Lynn, who was in Norway and the northern islands, is referred to with respect by Nansen, as having observed for latitudes with an astrolabe. But his book is lost, and we only know him from Chaucer, and from brief notices by Mercator and Hakluyt. Nansen makes short work of the supposed Zeni voyage, which had such lasting and misleading influence on the work of later cartographers. The Zeni voyage, he says, is a fabrication from several earlier maps.

The work concludes with the early voyages in search of the Isle of Brazil from Bristol, the voyage of John Cabot, and the Portuguese voyages of the two Corte Real brothers. Nansen thinks that Cabot never returned from his second voyage, a misfortune which would account for the silence respecting it. He gives full extracts from the news letters of Pasqualigo, Soncino, and Cantino, which comprise all that is known of the voyages of Cabot and the two Corte-Reals. If Nansen's conjecture is correct respecting Cabot, and it accounts for much, all three naval worthies, like La Prouse and Franklin, found graves in the midst of their discoveries.

It is impossible to speak too highly of the value of this admirable work. For thoroughness of research, combined with literary skill, and keen insight, it has not been surpassed. Nansen has proved himself to be a great historian as well as a great explorer.

My friend manfully defends the usefulness and importance of polar exploration. The 'King's Mirror,' that grand old Norwegian chronicle, gives three motives for Arctic voyages—the desire for gain, the desire for knowledge, and, highest of all, the desire for fame. Nansen, referring to these motives, dwells on the power of the unknown over the minds of men. That motive tempers the human will for the conquest of difficulties. It has furnished a school of manliness and self-conquest in the midst of the slackness of varying ages. The sea-power and imperial dominion of England drew their vigour from the love of enterprise, the longing to solve the problems of the unknown.

1481. The discovery of this correspondence would be very interesting. Senhor Pedro d'Azevedo, assistant "conservador" at the Torre do Tombo in Lisbon, kindly made a search for me in the archives of King Alfonso V., but could find nothing. He suggests that the presence in Lisbon of a Dane (mentioned by Azurara) at that time may have led to the correspondence.