

WERE REAL DISCOVERERS

To Columbus is accorded the glory of discovering America—which he did, as a fact—but there were undoubtedly other and prior discoverers of this great land in which we live. For instance, the Norsemen have quite well-authenticated claims as discoverers.

Little is known concerning these people prior to about the end of the 10th century except what can be gathered from legends, mythology and history that is more or less doubtful. It is certain, however, that they were the most hardy and intrepid sailors of their day and that in the ninth and 10th centuries their ships were common visitors at practically all European ports.

For three centuries they made piratical expeditions to the neighboring coasts of England and their fighting men could be hired by any ruler who had the money to pay them. They made settlements in Greenland, Iceland and Normandy. Old records show that a Norseman named Herjulfson while on a voyage from Iceland to Greenland in 986 A. D. was driven by winds far out of his reckonings to the west. A bold rugged coast, now believed to have been that of Labrador or Newfoundland, was sighted several times but Herjulfson did not land. Lief Ericsson set out in the year 1000 for the purpose of testing the truth of Herjulfson's report and in the spring of the following year, it appears, landed at Labrador, which he found superior in many respects to Iceland.

One historian says that Ericsson and his followers traveled as far south as Massachusetts where they remained for more than a year. They also visited Rhode Island, he says, and even entered New York harbor. Other Norsemen came in the next few years and colonies were planted in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia but these settlements soon died out and the Norsemen lost all interest in the newly discovered land—Vinland—which they believed to be a continuation of the coast of Greenland; they never dreamed that they had really found a new continent. The account of the Norsemen's explorations and settlements in America is borne out by the fact that reasonably consistent records of Ericsson's voyage have been made by Norse historians, also by the finding of Norse remains at Newport, R. I., and other places in America.

WRITING OF FAMOUS LONGFELLOW POEMS

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, when he became professor of modern languages and literature at Harvard university in 1835, went to live at what was known as the old Vassal mansion, at one time the most pretentious home in Cambridge. Gen. Washington had his headquarters in this house when he became head of the colonial army in July, 1775, and

under the elms that stood on its lawn he met Gen. Lafayette and conferred with him.

Many of the poet's famous works were written in this home, according to Hezekiah Butterworth, the Boston historian. The original of "The Clock on the Stairs" ticked away the time and chimed the hours as he wrote. "The Psalm of Life" was inspired by a summer morning in 1838 when Longfellow was still a young man. For a long time he kept the poem in his diary and would not consent to have it published. When he finally surrendered it it quickly became a favorite everywhere.

A friend of the poet traveling in Japan once found a few lines of the poem in Japanese inscribed on a fan. The friend purchased the fan and sent it to Longfellow as an evidence of how widely his "Psalm of Life" was known and appreciated.

In 1879 a storm of extraordinary violence swept the coast of New England. Being unable to sleep that night, Longfellow arose from his bed and wrote the "Wreck of the Hesperus," putting on the finishing touches as the clock on the stairs chimed the hour of three.

On one occasion when the poet went to call on a newly married couple he found them seated at a little tea table before the hearth. As the young husband, like himself, was a poet, Longfellow suggested that he write a poem on the Acadian custom of hanging the cane. A decade later he met the husband again and when he found that he had not acted on his suggestion and written the poem, Longfellow set to work and wrote "The Hanging of the Cane" himself.

The story of Evangeline was told to Longfellow by Hawthorne who stated that he had been urged to write a romance based on it but that he considered it better suited for verse. The outline of "Hiawatha" was obtained from a story related to Schoolcraft by Abraham Le Fort, an Onondaga chieftian. An old colonial hostelry at Sudbury, Mass., which is still in existence suggested the "Tale of a Wayside Inn."

THE CHARM WORKED

A young woman who thought she was losing her husband's affection went to a seventh daughter of a seventh daughter for a love-powder. The mystery-woman told her:

"Get a raw piece of beef, cut flat, about an inch thick. Slice an onion in two, and rub the meat on both sides with it. Put on pepper and salt, and toast it on each side over red coal-fire. Drop on three lumps of butter and two sprigs of parsley, and get him to eat it."

The young wife did so, and her husband loved her ever after.