

THE

NORSE COLONIZATION

IN AMERICA

BY THE LIGHT OF THE

VATICAN FINDS

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BY

MARIE A. SHIPLEY,

NEE BROWN.



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The following letters will explain themselves:—

I.

FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW OFFICE,
11, Henrietta St, Covent Garden,
London, W.C.
November 10th, 1898.
Mrs. Shipley.

My dear Madam,
I am extremely obliged for your courteous letter and the kind offer which you have been good enough to make me. I do not think, however, that I can avail myself of it, because the price is largely in excess of what is usually given for historical and literary articles appearing in the Fortnightly Review.

But I should be very glad to have a single article for which I would give thirty guineas, if that should prove convenient to you, and I would promise publication in any month you desired.

Believe me, faithfully Yours,
W. L. COURTNEY.

II.

FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW OFFICE,
December 6th, 1898.

John Shipley, Esq.

My dear Sir:—Many thanks for your letter, which I think I thoroughly understand. My wish is to publish the article which Mrs. Shipley was good enough to send me, in January. Indeed, acting on her kind letter which I recently received, I have sent the MS. to the printers, and am expecting a proof

THE NORSE COLONIZATION IN AMERICA, BY THE LIGHT OF THE VATICAN FINDS.

ALTHOUGH the nations grouped as the English-speaking Race literally live, move, and have their being in the direct and inevitable results of the Norse, or pre-Anglian discovery of America—it is incorrect to apply the term *Columbian* to a discovery that in point of fact did not take place—there is no event recorded in history that has been more minimised, whose results and consequences have been more persistently and uniformly denied by historians than this most pregnant one from which the United States, Canada, and indeed the British Colonial Empire itself have derived their origin.

Historians, with an unaccountable blindness and fatuity, have overlooked, nay, avoided, as if with a sort of dread, the sources from which alone they could have ascertained the whole truth with regard to the Norse colonies in America; they have given considerable attention to bits of personal narrative transmitted in saga-form to posterity by the actors themselves, or their near relatives, such as Thorfnn Karlsefne's account of his adventures and sojourn in Vinland (pity there could not have been a *Guadríð's Saga* as well!)—the account given by Erik the Red, and various others more or less second-hand; they have taken infinite pains to piece together the often conflicting or ill-fitting fragments of Icelandic records; charmed by the Northern spirit of romance, and misled by their desire for the heroic, dazzlingly graphic, and yet circumstantial details of Viking life and achievements, the fairly sublime outpourings which made the Icelandic skalds almost as famous as their heroes, modern writers on this great but baffling subject have utterly neglected to examine the sober, prosy, business-like, and tediously methodical statements of the ecclesiastics embodying the power that held jurisdiction both in the old Norse home-

..... AMERIQUE par les Normands en X^{ème} siècle" (Paris, 1874).

I confess that under these circumstances I am more than doubtful whether I can publish your article in the Fortnightly Review. I am sorry that some of these facts were not known to me at the time when I first received your article.¹⁾ Believe me, dear Madam, faithfully Yours,
W. L. COURTNEY.

Notes. ¹⁾ Our title incorrectly quoted. ²⁾ Delightful sequence of logic. ³⁾ These facts are stated with absolute correctness in the article. See pages 8, 10, 22. ⁴⁾ Probably one or two hundred, but none with the deductions now drawn. ⁵⁾ Confession (of ignorance), they say, is good for the soul.

lands and in the new colonies, duly represented in all, the power that bound them all together and rendered their common existence one and indissoluble for several centuries, the one power, or combination of men, able to give a *connected* account of the life in those colonies so directly sustained and ordered by itself.

The key-note to the whole subject is the fact that the christianizing of the Scandinavian North, including Iceland, was coeval with the discovery of America by Leif Erikson. So radical was the spiritual and mental change effected, that temporal conditions, habits of life, the entire activity of the most active of races, underwent as complete a metamorphosis. The Viking Age was past, the vocation of the Skalds was gone, and ere long no more Sagas were composed. The Norse religion, well described by Thomas Carlyle as "a rude, but earnest, sternly impressive Consecration of Valour", had been replaced by one with ideals the very reverse of those cherished by the ancient Scandinavians. It was not barbarism changed by a sudden process into civilization, but one distinct type of civilization transmuted into another, the Northern cult, to define the two sharply, into the Southern, the Scandinavian into the Roman, and the one well-nigh obliterated the other, effacing all the old characteristics. Whether the change thus effected was for the better, or the reverse, is a subject for the thought and profound study of the theologians, metaphysicians, and ethical philosophers of the future; we are only concerned now with the fact that this thorough-going change took place, that the Christian religion substituted itself for the old pagan régime, that its sway and authority became absolute both in the home-lands and the colonies, and that henceforth the ecclesiastics of the Christian Church chronicled *all* that occurred within their spiritual dominions, their multitudinous records being the only ones that there are to consult. To be strictly logical, accurate and impartial, one is not justified in any sense in applying the word Roman Catholic to the religion thus established; it was Christianity pure and simple, for until the breach known as the Reformation occurred in the sixteenth century, no such distinction as Catholic and Protestant existed. These are comparatively modern distinctions, which do not apply to the spiritual jurisdiction over the Vinland and Greenland colonies. Neither is the consideration of this whole subject properly a religious or dogmatic one; it is a purely historical one, though based, through the nature of the case, on the evidence of exclusively ecclesiastical

sources. That these are exclusively *Christian* sources, is not a circumstance likely to invalidate their testimony or lessen their value among either the Catholics or Protestants in the many nations whose attention will be fixed with the most absorbing interest on these finds that are now being made in the Vatican Archives, and which will widen the mental horizon of the whole great circle of European and American readers who realize their vast and astonishing import, their re-creation of the American past, and readjustment of all the events that form its substance. The historian, as such, will be constrained to use his secular judgment, his reasoning power, all that he possesses of the faculty erroneously called legal acumen, in the consideration of this new and unexpected development of a subject heretofore regarded as a mere romantic episode, or prologue, before the serious existence of the nation began,—in 1492!

How the scholars and specialists in the rich domain of the Scandinavian past could have overlooked this clue, and groped and fumbled for evidence in the wrong quarter, in every quarter sure to be barren of it, becomes more inexplicable now that the method of arriving at the facts is shown to be so very simple and effectual. How was it that no one noted the circumstance that Adam of Bremen was a Canon, and that his book, *Historia Ecclesiastica Ecclesiarum Hamburgensis et Bre-mensis* (a most suggestive title), first published in 1076, contains almost the earliest allusion to the Norse discovery of America; that Ortelius, to whom von Humboldt incorrectly ascribes the merit of first recognizing this discovery in his superb illuminated volume *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570), was Philip II's cosmographer; that the famous *Codex Flatoensis*, was written or compiled by two priests, Jon Thordarson and Magnus Thorhallsson; and that the author of the Landnama-Bok, one of the sources of information regarding the Norse discovery, Ari hinn Frodi, the earliest Icelandic writer, was also a priest? How was it that no one jumped to the unmistakable conclusion that all the chronicling of all the events in the Norse colonies had been done by men in the service of the Church, and by so many of these officials that the number of their epistles and reports was really legion, and must be accumulated somewhere in the religious or monastic repositories?

The magic word "Bishops" was the combination which, years ago, enabled me to unlock the treasure-chest of this mighty subject. The line of bishops in Greenland, testified to as early as 1705 by Thormodus

Torfaeus in his *Historia Vinlandiæ Antiquæ*,—this fundamental fact became the golden chain of certainty to which all else was appended, for bishops, a bishopric, involved a considerable population, an intelligent community, refined and even prosperous conditions of life, and uninterrupted intercourse with both mother-land and Mother-Church; for such a bishopric, with all its high functionaries and supernumeraries, must of necessity, from first to last, have been under the direct surveillance and superintendence of the hierarchy itself, and all communications, personal or epistolary, by whatever route, whether *via* Skalholt and Holar, Bremen-Hamburg, or Nidaros, had the one terminus,—the Eternal City. What the difficulties of travel must have been in those days, when no highways had as yet been built in that rugged chaos, Norway, and when Iceland must have been more untravelable than even now after ages of roadlessness, is beyond the imagination of mortal to conceive; yet long distances were traversed with as much ease, apparently, as if Cook's people had managed the tours; we are even told that the bishops "from time to time crossed the ocean to attend the provincial councils held in the metropolitan cities", and even the General Councils of the Church; while commercial relations were unimpeded by distance or climatic conditions, or any other obstacles.

It is a matter of pure mathematics to determine how much could have been put on paper by the Papal executive at Rome and the local administration in the diocese of Gardar, but we keep within perfectly prudent bounds if we calculate that the sum-total of correspondence still extant, in the shape of records, business receipts, and lists of fees, bulls, etc., etc., when little by little exhumed by Dr. Jellic from the Vatican Archives, will be sufficient to make of the Norse colonial life in Greenland and Vinland a very solid reality.

Thus when I found the vast majority of scholars and historians relying on the two Sagas, that of Erik the Red and that of Thorfinn Karlsefne, as the sole fount of information, and making such an ado about the *Codex Flatoënsis*, I came to the conclusion that these poor mariners were hopelessly stranded on the reefs of their own shallowness. Even so astute a writer as Samuel Laing, in the introduction to his translation of *Heimskringla* (London, 1844), asserts that "All that can be found, or that is required to be proved, for establishing the priority of the discovery of America by the Northmen, is that the Saga or traditional account of these voyages in the 11th century was committed to

writing at a known date, viz. between 1387 and 1395, in a manuscript of unquestioned authenticity, of which these particular Sagas or accounts relative to Vinland form but a small portion". And yet this author gives details of the spiritual supervision over Greenland, "in which Christianity and Christian establishments, parishes, churches, and even monasteries were flourishing, or at least existing to such an extent that from 1124 to 1387 there was a regular succession of bishops, of whom seventeen are named". (Vide Torfaeus.) Even C. C. Rafn's grand work, *Antiquitates Americane*, is mainly based on these two principal Sagas, although comprising fac-similes of other important parchment codices; the only radical innovation in the book being Finn Magnussen's insistence on the fact that Columbus visited Iceland in 1477, a fact which although obtained from the *Life of Christopher Columbus* by his son Fernando, this author demonstrates very forcibly in his paper on the English trade to Iceland, contained in the second volume of *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Oldkyndighet*, 1833. The vigorous new growths of historical literature to which the publication of Rafn's *Antiquitates Americane* gave rise, all started from this same saga-root; the standard work by N. L. Beamish (London, 1841), reprinted by the Prince Society in Boston, consisted of the translation of these sagas about the Norse voyages to America, and in his introduction to this book, Mr. Slafter affirms: "Both of these documents are declared, by those qualified to judge of the character of ancient writings, to be authentic, and were clearly regarded by their writers as narratives of historical truth". And this is as far as Wheaton, Humboldt, Pigott, Mallet, Worsaa, Gravier, Malte-Brun, or any of the authors, the wide world over, could get!

The incompleteness of the records is deeply deplored in the valuable Danish work, the most comprehensive compilation of these facts, edited by C. C. Rafn and Finn Magnussen, entitled *Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker*, yet even in the regret expressed by the editors, a hint is conveyed that, somewhere, the missing annals are in existence, a hint which we are now in a position, with Dr. Jellic's able assistance, to resolve into a certainty. The following passage in the work just named is deeply significant: "Just as we in general must deplore the silence or incomplete communications about Greenland, of the old annals still in preservation, this holds no less in regard to the disappearance or destruction of other such manuscripts, which we plainly

trace to have been in existence, either in Iceland, Norway, or Denmark, as late as the 17th century".

The search in the Vatican Archives, very much at random at first, seems to have been begun prior to 1755 by Prof. Paul Henri Mallet, of Geneva, who succeeded in finding the much-cited Bull of Pope Nicholas V., of which I give an abstract here, because it has connection with something else of deep importance. This is much abridged from the complete and prolix Latin text of the Bull, which I have before me, as Dr. Jelic has also succeeded in finding it in the Vatican, and for the first time procuring a full transcript.

1448, Sept. 20. Pope Nicholas V. commands Gotsvein Bishop of Skalholt and Gottschalk Bishop of Holar, that after enquiry concerning the state of the diocese Gardar, and taking counsel with their Metropolitan, they restore the ecclesiastical hierarchy there, by apostolic authority. Arch. Vat. Reg. 407, fo. 251.

Nicholas etc. to the Ven. Brothers the Bishops of Skalholt and Holar Greeting, etc. It devolves on us to bring back to a state of happy tranquillity not only those who have fallen into errors and impiety, but also those who have been the victims of disturbances and persecutions. Thus there has come to our ears and embittered our mind the pitiable plaint of our dear children the natives and inhabitants of the island of Greenland, said to be situate in the utmost bounds of ocean off the north of Norway in the province of Nidaros (Drontheim), setting forth that in that island, whose inhabitants had received the faith nearly six hundred years before, by the preaching of the glorious Saint and King Olaf, they had kept the same firmly and fearlessly, and that in later times they had been assiduous in their devotion, and that very many sacred edifices and a splendid (*insignis*) cathedral had been built, in which divine worship was sedulously carried on, until about thirty years ago they were set upon by a fleet of barbarians from the pagan territories near, who assailed the whole people most cruelly, and devastating the country and sacred edifices with fire and sword, left only nine parish churches in the island, which is said to be very extensive, and almost inaccessible on account of the rugged mountains; they led away captive the poor people of both sexes, especially those who

seemed strong and able to bear the burdens of slavery and tyranny. But, as this plaint adds, after a lapse of time many returned from captivity, rebuilt their ruined homes, and desired to restore and extend the divine cult, and since by the pressure of these calamities and hunger and poverty they had so far been unable to support priests, they have for the whole thirty years lacked the solace of the Church and the ministration of priests, unless any of them through desire of receiving the divine offices had been willing to undertake the long journey of several days to those churches which the barbarians had left uninjured; they have therefore humbly prayed that out of paternal compassion we would grant their pious and salutary prayer and supply these defects. We therefore, inclining to the just and worthy prayers and desires of the natives and other inhabitants of Greenland, not having certain knowledge of the people or their circumstances, charge and command you, whom we understand to be the bishops nearest to the said island, that after diligent enquiry, if the above account is correct, and the people are sufficiently recovered in numbers and circumstances, you send suitable priests to restore the said parishes, and that by requisition to the Metropolitan Council a Bishop be consecrated in due form, for which purpose, laying the whole matter upon your conscience, we by apostolic authority do confer upon you full and plenary powers. Given at Rome, etc.

It would seem that the bishops of Skalholt and Holar, in Iceland, did not respond to this appeal, and neglected, their conscience notwithstanding, to send to Greenland the bishop and priests asked for. The Pope's assertion that his beloved children there had been Christians for six hundred years has aroused so much scepticism as to cause the Bull to be discredited, and the statement that they had been attacked thirty years before by the heathen of the neighbouring coasts, could not be accurately fixed as to dates.

The next notable instance of exploration of the Vatican Archives appears to be the indefatigable researches of the eminent Norwegian historian P. A. Munch, who, convinced that the Vatican was the place of all others in which to seek for records bearing upon the early history of Norway, spent many years there, and although not finding as much as he desired, found enough to compensate him; but unfortunately the

greater part of his transcripts of the documents was lost through the sinking of the ship on which they had been sent to Norway. Consequently what the documents really were, or their value to history, can never be known. Chief among the transcripts that he himself took to Norway were those comprising the account-books of the two Nuncios who were sent to Sweden and Norway to collect the tithes for the carrying on of the Crusades, including those from the diocese of Gardar, in two manuscript volumes entitled: *Rationes Collectorie Sætiæ, Norvegiæ, Gothiæ et Angliæ, 1316-1326*. These were published by the Norwegian Government, and edited by the very historian, Prof. Gustaf Storm, who is pleased to deny that the Norse discovery and colonization of America are historical facts, having written a book to disprove them.

Many vague hints and allusions are to be found among many writers, as to the existence of documents bearing upon this heretofore obscure subject. The Danish translator of Paul Riant's exhaustive work, *Expéditions et Pêlerinages Scandinaves*, one aimed to show the connection of the Scandinavian kingdoms with the Holy Land at the time of the Crusades, within the period 1000-1350, remarks significantly in the preface, "that the records, the scientific data, that are preserved in the great book-collections of Southern Europe particularly qualified the author to shed light upon many events, which our own rich historical sources, with regard to this branch of history, are not always able to illumine with all the completeness desirable". Henry HARRISSE, too, has indicated that the place to look for records bearing upon the early history of nations is in the monastic repositories, and from time to time a scarcely repressed eagerness has been shown among Roman Catholic writers, who alone have felt a firm faith in the existence in the Vatican Archives of documents relative to the Norse discovery of America, for the anticipated but long delayed historical treat in store. Next in order I may mention my own openly avowed wish, in 1888, to search for the buried documents, and my strong appeal to my (then) nation to be enabled to engage in it; and next, and finally, the treasures soon to be spread before the world by Dr. Jelic and ourselves, he as successful finder, we as liberal dispensers and hosts, so to speak, who will make this rich historical feast available to the whole world, and invite the people of all nations and of all beliefs to partake freely and to spread the knowledge to the four corners of the earth.

If the Vatican Archives had revealed any of their pure gold *then*, just before the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, the newly-minted historical coin then in circulation would have turned very coppery, there would have been no issue of Columbian postage-stamps, no national prostration before the several statues of Columbus, and the immortal fame of that unique discoverer—of his predecessors' discoveries—and, one may add, no necessity for the reproduction of the convent of La Rabida and its associations on the unstable Chicago foundations, for there would have been known to be other convents and monasteries of far greater interest to both the modern Norsemen in the Great Northwest and the native Americans, for instance that of St. Thomas, in Greenland, or those described so graphically by Ivar Bardsen, "the great monastery dedicated to St. Olaus and St. Augustine"; and "the convent at Rafnsfjord, of the Order of St. Benedict". This is the only contemporary account of Greenland (excepting the somewhat confused one by the Zeno brothers) which was known before the present researches, and the text in Rafn's work was found in the Farøe Islands. Ivar Bardsen was for many years Procurator of Gardar, the episcopal see of Greenland, and gives such a full description of the products of the land and of the ecclesiastical domains and edifices, as to excite one's expectations to the utmost in regard to the other descriptions and narratives certain to be available sooner or later.

Among Roman Catholic writers on the subject there were many, like Moosmüller, Revd. William F. and Dr. Richard H. Clarke, Fr. Bodfish, and others, who even before the Columbian excitement in the United States, and while it raged so wildly, desired most earnestly that the evidence contained in the Vatican records, covering the period of the Norse occupancy in America, might be brought to light; among non-Catholics, so far as I have been able to ascertain, I stood quite alone in this desire, and had to face the opposition of the solid consensus of opinion, as adverse as it was hostile, represented not only by the American Republic, but by all Europe. I was, in a word, the advocate of the most unpopular of subjects.

It was obviously an act of madness, yet none the less an inevitable one, for me to ask the Congress of the United States, in 1888, then already pledged to the pseudo-historical manifesto of 1892, for an appropriation to enable me to search for the buried documents in the Vatican Archives that would serve to disabuse the popular mind of all

its cherished delusions *à* Columbus, and to undermine the whole national structure that was intended to be the most imposing ever erected in homage to one of the greatest of men. That act now, however, has become one that is far from regrettable. It is the corner-stone of *my* historical edifice, which, it is safe to assert, will not be built upon sand.

Congress refused the appropriation, as a matter of course; all danger of unwelcome historical revelations, the earthquake shock to popular belief, was averted, and the welfare of the whole thus secured, it mattered little what happened to the minority of *one*. Uncom-miserated, I was left to suffer the concentrated agony of failure and despair; Mr. Shipley, then only my friend, was in London, striving to solve the problem as to why historical facts were the least able of any verities to fight their way through, and compel recognition, while our unknown and undreamed-of coadjutor, Dr. Luka Jelic, in the fresh vigour of his early manhood, was that very year threading the intricate labyrinths of the Vatican Archives, and finding the extraordinary documents that are now to be revealed for the first time to the English-reading public in the columns of this number of the *Fortnightly Review*.*

In blissful ignorance of their impending fate, the United States entered upon a new career of national prosperity, on their time-honoured and impregnable historical basis, and on the strength of the civilization which Spain and her faithful Columbus had, according to her own unimpeachable testimony, "led to those shores". The very first events in this new epoch were, through a bizarre freak of destiny, or well-designed Nemesis, the forcible expulsion of Spain from the Western Hemisphere, and the removal, by the amazed victim of American military power, of the bones of her now dishonoured Columbus from unhallowed American, or soon to be annexed, territory. The Borgian Era was at a close; the boundary dispute of four hundred years' standing, which was never settled quite to anybody's satisfaction, was suddenly cut short, and the new Imperialists went into map-making on a scale of their own. Meanwhile, Dr. Jelic, in the deep seclusion of the Vatican recesses, was unearthing some old maps, pre-Columbian ones, and a certain old Bull, contemporaneous with the first voyage of Columbus, which were destined to effect a still greater metamorphosis.

* See editor's letters prefixed.

This event, exquisitely appropriate and consistent, an historical transformation-scene, so vivid and brilliant as to forever prevent history from being derided as dry and musty, her records mouldy, and the investigation of these the useless grubbing in the past of minds more dead than alive,—this unprecedented event is right upon us, and the change wrought by it will be radical enough!

It is worthy of note that after Congress had duly disposed of the Leif Erikson memorialist, some of the magnates in Washington indulged in a characteristic act thus described in the *Catholic Review*, New York, for some month, probably September, of the year 1891, under the heading: "CATHOLIC ARCHIVES TO BE SEARCHED".—"A despatch dated Washington, Aug. 29, appears in the *New York Sun*, stating that at the request of the Latin-American Bureau of the World's Columbian Exposition, Cardinal Gibbons has requested the proper officials of the several religious orders of the Catholic Church, both in Europe and America, to cause their Archives to be searched for historical records bearing on the discovery and settlement of the New World. It is known that every ship that left Spain, beginning with the first voyage of Columbus, carried among its crew a priest or a friar, and that these missionaries made voluminous reports to the heads of their different Orders, very few of which have ever been published. It is believed that the Archives of the Church are filled with valuable historical material. The quadricentennial of Columbus revives interest in the early history of the continent, and Cardinal Gibbons has undertaken the work with great zeal. The Very Rev. E. V. Boursaud, S.J., the president of Woodstock College, Maryland, has also entered into the search with interest, and is now corresponding with the heads of the orders in Rome and elsewhere on the subject."

Once my Plea before Congress had properly become "Congressional news", about every newspaper in the United States had repeated my argument and firm belief that "the Archives of the Church are filled with valuable historical material", and that these archives "ought to be searched for historical records bearing on the discovery and settlement of the New World". I had previously engaged in a very spirited correspondence with Mr. William Elleroy Curtis, the head of the Latin-American Department, because I had found that he and the late Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen were making a rather too free application of my ideas and plan for a Viking Exhibit at the World's Fair, and the

above proves that he had again been poaching on my preserves, *unless* he had shrewdly calculated that inasmuch as their accepted theory as to the discovery and settlement of the New World did not date farther back than 1492, the soil of the various archives need not be stirred deeply enough to dig up any Norse fallacies and myths. However that might have been, the American Commissioners found nothing whatever, even at the Vatican, and probably reported at the Washington headquarters that the Norse enthusiast had put them on a false scent.

If it can truly be said that "the history of Sweden is the history of its Kings", that of Greenland is a history of its Bishops, and this holds good with Vinland as well. The value that has recently been set upon all information that can possibly be gleaned concerning the line of Bishops appointed to the diocese of Gardar can be judged by a paragraph occurring in an article in the *American Catholic Quarterly Review* for July 1889, by Dr. Richard H. Clarke, entitled *The Conversion of the Norihmen*: "There is one subject more especially, now most imperfectly explored, and involved in doubt and confusion, which is, the episcopate of the Western Hemisphere, involving the exact names of the seventeen or eighteen bishops, the dates of their appointments, the exact order of succession, their history and services to the cause of Christianity, what reports they made to Rome, when and where and by whom consecrated, their deaths and burials, and the churches which they founded".

Thanks to Dr. Luka Jelic, Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Canon Law in the Central Seminary of Zadar, in Dalmatia, whose keen historical insight and discrimination, and trained ecclesiastical faculty, united with an intimate knowledge of all the intricate and involved processes of Vatican research, his possession of the clues, have enabled him to succeed where nearly all others have failed, even to the illustrious American Commission,—thanks to this highly gifted colleague of ours, as earnest and determined as he is expert, this subject of the bishops is no longer "imperfectly explored". By virtue of the many records he has already found, he has settled nearly all the points enumerated by Dr. Clarke, having obtained the exact names, the dates of appointment, the exact order of succession, of *twenty-five* bishops instead of seventeen, the twenty-fourth bishop, Matthias, having been appointed in 1491, by Pope Innocent VIII., and confirmed in his office, in 1492, by no less a person than Pope Alexander VI., who, as Cardinal

Borgia, had taken part in his appointment. The whole series of twenty-five Bishops stretches almost uninterrupted from Bishop Erik Upsi, appointed Regionary Bishop for the American colonies in 1112, whose successor, the first regular Bishop, established the episcopal See at Gardar, to Vincent, the last of the number, appointed in 1519, mentioned in 1537, and who probably retained office up to the introduction there of the Reformation in 1540. Out of this number, nine were only titular, and did not officiate personally within their diocese. These titular bishops, although not all Italians, seem to have been chosen from the immediate precincts of the Papal court, and several of them are mentioned as belonging to the Orders of Minor and Preaching Friars. One of these titular bishops, Bartholomæus de Sancto Hippolito, was consecrated at Florence; another, Gibellinus Volant, of the Order of the Hermits of St. Augustine, was a Penitentiary of the Basilica of St. Peter's at Rome.

The bishopric of Gardar is frequently found mentioned in the lists of Provinces and suffragans in the Vatican, where it figures (after 1148) as under the Archbishopric of Nidaros (Drontheim); these lists also give the bishopric of "Sodor otherwise Man" (*Sudereitensi aliter Manensi*) as under the same province, which also included, mentioned separately by itself, the Church of St. Columba "de insula Ily", taxed at two besants annually (*Libri Censuum*, 1192 and 1400). One of the sources made use of by Dr. Jelic in establishing the list of bishops is the series of books of receipts for payment of the bishops' dues on their appointment. The fees payable vary curiously; in 1425 Robertus Ryngmann, bishop elect, paid two hundred and fifty gold florins; in 1432 another, Johannes Herler de Moys, paid sixty-six florins of gold, while in 1483 Jacobus de Blois offered to the Sacred College thirty-three gold florins, which sum, by order of the Pope, was immediately returned to him, and his Bull of appointment was granted to him free of payment. The same thing occurred in the case of the next bishop, as we shall see later. In 1450 the remark is found that "the island of Greenland is almost cut off from Europe". As for reports made to Rome, so ardently desired by Dr. Clarke, there has been found by Dr. Jelic the report of the Archbishop of Drontheim, describing minutely the canonical visitation of the province, including Greenland, dating from the 14th and 15th centuries.

These highly gratifying particulars, although more ample than one

had dared to hope, are still so deficient as to whet public curiosity and interest to the keenest intensity. Never was line of bishops more illustrious than these, now so tardily appreciated and cherished by posterity; never were the slightest incidents in the lives of men more prized, their every act and movement more commented upon, than the operations of these prelates of Vinland will be, as the circumstances gradually become known. The world's public now seems to be in for a long term of ecclesiastical study and research, if its thirst for knowledge on all these points is to be appeased! And mining in the gold-fields of Klondyke or Coolgardie, diamond-hunting in South Africa, will prove far less fascinating than delving in the treasure-chambers of the Vatican, arduous though it be, and far less profitable in all respects to the civilized world.

His paper on the bishops Dr. Jelic sent to the Third International Catholic Scientific Congress, held in Brussels in 1894, as a memoir on *L'Évangélisation de l'Amérique avant Christophe Colomb*. Under the same title he had contributed one to the second Congress, held in Paris in 1891. As it was then the eve of the Columbian Centenary, the historical committee had asked him to send them something, and the result was the most wonderful combination of facts and deductions, all drawn with unerring skill and precision from his copious finds in the Vatican, that were ever elicited on the subject of the Norse colonies in America, *not* the theme most in harmony with the Columbus Centenary, or its world-wide commemoration.

In this memoir of 1891 Dr. Jelic gives special attention to a line of religious activity that bound the colonists in Greenland very closely to Mother-Church, viz. the movement known as the Crusades, for the collection of the tithes in that remote province kept the Greenlanders and Vinlanders under the vigilant notice of Rome for a long period. Among all the other documents Dr. Jelic chanced to come across the identical account-books previously found by Munch, but uses them to much greater advantage, drawing from them details and statistics that define in the most admirable manner the conditions in those colonies. The six years' tithes receivable from the clergy for the purposes of the Crusades (imposed on the clerical revenues by the Council of Vienne in 1311), show that the clergy of Gardar were both numerous and rich. Taking as his basis the annual amount received for Peter's Pence, he deduces approximately the population of the diocese of Gardar. In the

kingdom of Norway the contribution for Peter's Pence was fixed at one Norwegian penny per household. The amount collected represents 972 households in the diocese of Gardar. The tax being paid in walrus teeth, which were sold at a slight loss, Dr. Jelic concludes that in 1327 there were in the diocese of Gardar, in round numbers, 1000 homes taxed for Peter's Pence. Supposing that there were on an average ten persons to each house, he concludes that there were about 10,000 of the faithful in the diocese, and about 300,000 in the whole province of Drontheim. "In the years following", he continues, "the religious conditions of the diocese of Gardar steadily improved. In 1418 this diocese paid for the tithe and Peter's Pence more than twice as much as it had done in 1327. The number of clerics and of the faithful had therefore considerably increased".

This matter of the collection of tithes and Peter's Pence had already occasioned so much trouble at Rome, and correspondence back and forth, that the papal amanuenses, at all events, had little chance of forgetting those vexatious Greenlanders, whose tithes were about sixteen years in arrear by the time they were collected. Thus "in 1276 the Archbishop of Drontheim obtained from Pope John XXI. a dispensation from personally traversing the diocese of Gardar, to collect these tithes. In his opinion five years would not have been sufficient to accomplish such a mission. The same Archbishop stated that in six years he could visit all the other dioceses of his province, corresponding to the whole kingdom of Norway. It results from this that the diocese of Gardar alone had almost the same extent as Norway itself. For this reason also Pope Nicholas III. granted, in 1279, extraordinary powers to the clerics delegated by the Archbishop of Drontheim to get in the tithes in the diocese of Gardar. By a Bull of Martin IV., of the year 1282, the tithe and Peter's Pence in the diocese of Gardar were allowed to be paid in products of the country, that is to say, in ox-hides, seal-skins, and whalebone; all these were taken to Norway and there exchanged for money." Dr. Jelic argues that the hides must have come from Vinland, and adds, "In fact, we find products of Vinland figuring among the tithes for the year 1307".

Just at the period of its greatest prosperity, in 1418, Greenland suffered an invasion of barbarians, the effects of which are shown in the Bull of Nicholas V., already quoted. This attempt to restore the Greenland episcopate having proved unavailing, the Greenlanders more than

forty years afterwards renewed their request to Pope Innocent VIII. That these two petitions should have reached the Holy See at all, shows that communication was not so entirely cut off as has been stated, even in the remarkable Bull to which I am about to call attention, and which takes rank as Dr. Jelic's most extraordinary find up to date. This document, remarkable in more ways than one, as I shall presently have occasion to point out, gives the result of the Greenlanders' second application to the Holy See, a result more tangible apparently than the fiasco of 1448. In free but almost complete translation, this Bull reads as follows:—

1492-93. Pope Alexander VI. commands that the Bulls for Matthias O. S. Benedict, already promoted by Innocent VIII. to the See of Gardar, be issued free of charge. Arch. Vat. Diversorum Alexandri VI. Arm. 29, T. 50, fol. 23.

Since as we understand the Church of Gardar is situate at the end of the world in the country of Greenland, in which the people there living, for lack of bread, wine, and oil are accustomed to make use of dried fish and milk; and on account of the very rare voyages to the said land caused by the intense freezing of the waters, so that no ship is believed to have made the voyage thither for 80 years; and if any such voyage were to be made it is believed that it could only be done in the month of August when the ice is thawed; and for these same reasons the church there is said to have had for these eighty years no bishop or priest over it, personally residing there. On account of which absence of Catholic clergy it has resulted that many who were once catholics and had received baptism have left the faith, shame be it said!—also that the inhabitants of that land have nothing left in memory of the Christian religion but a *corporal* which is exhibited once a year, upon which, a hundred years ago, the Body of Christ was consecrated by the last priest then remaining there. For these and other considerations therefore, our predecessor Innocent VIII. of happy memory, wishing to provide the said church then destitute of pastoral solace with a useful and suitable pastor, by the advice also of his brethren (the Cardinals) of whose number we then were, appointed our venerable brother Matthias of the Order of S. Benedict, bishop

elect of Gardar, a man filled with the highest fervour of devotion for leading back the minds of renegades to the way of eternal salvation and eradicating errors of this kind, and ready to risk his life willingly and freely in the extremely dangerous journey thither on which he is about to set forth, as their bishop and pastor. We therefore, highly commending the pious and laudable purpose of this bishop elect, and desirous to help him on account of his poverty, of our own motion and certain knowledge and with the counsel and assent of our brethren, do command our beloved sons the *rescribendarius*, abbreviators, solicitors, sealers, and registrars of documents, and the rest of the officials of our chancellery and of our Apostolic Chamber, under pain of excommunication, that all and sundry apostolic letters on and about the said promotion to the See of Gardar of the said elect, be issued and caused to be issued in each and every of their offices free of charge and without any tax, payment, or exaction whatsoever, all contradiction ceasing. Also we command under the said pain that the clerks and notaries of the Apostolic Chamber do hand over and deliver to the said elect all such letters and bulls freely, without any exaction of *annates* or of minute services or other rights usually paid, everything to the contrary notwithstanding. Given etc. (First year of Alexander VI.)

The Bull of Pope Nicholas V. in 1448 in their behalf having failed to excite the compassion of the Icelanders, their nearest neighbours and kinsmen, the Holy See itself was constrained to concern itself with the unhappy condition of the Greenland colonists, and here we have a manifestation of deep solicitude from the Pope himself, even to the extent of remitting the financial exactions usually imposed upon bishops elect. Matthias was evidently as anxious to go as the pontiff was to have him go, and seems to have been the first since Jacobus Petri Treppe, who officiated in Gardar at the time of the invasion of the barbarians, in 1418, who was willing to undertake the onerous charge of personal ministration. From the circumstances of his election, as narrated in the Bull, and from the zeal and fervour of his devotion, we may take for granted that he actually proceeded to his diocese.

Why the people of Iceland manifested such apathy and indifference as to the condition of their former colony, and why Norway was equally careless as to what fate befell it after it had ceased to be a

Republic and had become subject to the crown, is a mystery yet to be cleared up. The fact is very severely stated in *Grönländs Historiske Mindesmerker*, which account, after describing the series of disasters that had befallen the colony, shipwrecks, sea-ice, and attacks of the natives, continues: "Notwithstanding the land had suffered so much, both through Nature's harshness and hostile attacks, possibly also by infectious disease, the Norwegian Government committed the great mistake of appropriating the exclusive right of trading with the land's inhabitants. This, under such conditions cruel monopoly, which afterwards in principle was employed with Iceland, for four or five centuries, to that land's irreparable injury, seems especially to have caused the destruction of the colony, as the Government prohibited all private persons from carrying on commerce, nay, even all navigation to Greenland, and yet, especially at the last, neglected itself to make voyages to the land, and to provide the inhabitants with the necessaries which they needed from Europe to sustain life". A statement like this, made by such authorities as Rafn and Finn Magnussen, is practically irrefutable. It is also fully confirmed by another Danish author J. J. A. Worsaa, who shows that lively intercourse was maintained by Norway with the distant republics of Iceland and Greenland during the early part of the Middle Ages, but when their independence was overthrown in 1261, and they became tributary to the Norwegian crown, "the free trade that had previously flourished became more and more restricted, until finally the navigation to Greenland from the North ceased altogether".

These grievous conditions, if not the political and other causes that had produced them, were well known at Rome, as attested by the Bull before us of Pope Alexander VI., who even mentions the very few articles of diet obtainable by the Greenlanders for consumption, only dried fish and milk, and the extremely infrequent voyages to their shores. I doubt if anything could have more surprised the modern world than the intelligence, from his own pontifical pen, that Pope Alexander VI. had come to their rescue! And at the very time, too, when his attention would have seemed to all of us to have been wholly absorbed with the expedition of Christopher Columbus, and the news of his discovery of the Western World. To quote Dr. Jelic's comment on the Bull, "This took place precisely at the time when Europe was receiving with admiration the first news of the discovery of Columbus". Here was this Pope, ever destined to strike the world dumb with amaze-

ment, even four hundred years after his death, confirming, in 1492, the appointment of a bishop for Greenland in which he himself had taken part as Cardinal, in 1491; on the one hand, sending off with his apostolic blessing the twenty-fourth bishop of the diocese of Gardar, and on the other, the original discoverer of the New World, the first civilized white man who had ever crossed that ocean, the first scientist who had ever satisfactorily demonstrated the existence of continents and islands in that part of the globe, the first mariner with skill and pluck enough, as well as inspiration, to undertake such a perilous expedition! And neither of these esteemed contemporaries, started on similar missions, knew of the existence, or destination, of the other!

The flesh and blood inhabitants of Greenland and Vinland, countries that, geologically considered, had long since passed through the primitive periods, the people who had for centuries enjoyed such palpable proofs of papal superintendence and care, would have been thunder-struck had they known that in Spain and Italy, even in Rome, it was a matter of maritime experiment, based on mere theory, to determine whether there was any *terra firma* on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, in the absence of all save rhetorical proof, or the dreams and visions of the ambitious, self-seeking Genoese!

If Bishop Matthias, on his arrival, had disclosed to them the motives and expectations of Columbus, the inducements held out to the Spanish Sovereigns to incline them to become the patrons of so dangerous and doubtful an undertaking, to say nothing of the terms that Columbus succeeded in making for himself, the titles and honours secured in anticipation, what would they have thought? How could they, in their plain simplicity, have fathomed the subtlety of the Latin mind, its strange predilections for abstractions and mysticism, with such a passion for unsolved geographical problems that solved ones were discarded as worthless? To the Viking mind all this would have been inexplicable, the Greenlanders and Vinlanders would have failed utterly to grasp its meaning from a practical point of view. They would have asked, in consternation, "Are we then to be dropped — by all?" It was a mercy to them, as to so many others, that all knowledge of the future was withheld, and that no oracle foretold to them that the time would come when all the historians of their own race, and kindred ones, would affirm with one accord: "The

Norsemen are said to have discovered America in the tenth century, if the records found in the Sagas can be regarded as true statements of historic facts, and even to have established some colonies in Greenland and on the shores of the present United States, but in the lifetime of Columbus and the Cabots these colonies seem to have been absolutely unknown in Europe, they were forgotten even by the descendants of the old Northmen, and led to no results."

The memoir, including the two Bulls, extracts from the taxation-book (including lists of bishoprics), collectors' accounts, and receipts of the Apostolic Chamber, which Dr. Jellic found sent to the International Catholic Scientific Congress of 1891, at Paris, was thus a powerful summing up of all the rich and highly suggestive evidence from those great finds of his, a paper published very quietly, the year before the Columbian Centenary, whose lustre it was not of a nature to enhance; in fact, published semi-privately, as is the custom with all such contributions, in the *Compte-Rendu* of the Congress. Had these stupendous disclosures been made fully public, they would have had the effect of breaking down the Columbian Celebration all over the world. It is very certain that if all this had come to my knowledge in 1891, and I had then obtained possession of this paper with its volcanic force of long-suppressed documentary evidence, I would have called a halt to the forced march of the Americans, changed the whole plan of campaign, à la Norse, and rallied all the nations of Europe and North America, — the Scandinavian lands, England, Canada, the United States, France, Germany, even Russia, who is proud of Ruric as the progenitor of her Imperial house, — to join together in the most magnificent and colossal celebration the world had ever witnessed, and the only Viking one on record! It would have been a Viking resurrection, a Valhalla on earth! But, as it happened, this most fateful of memoirs only reached my hands in November, 1898, when it was sent to us by Dr. Jellic himself, in pledge of our compact to devote our three lives to these great researches until we have found all that remains extant bearing on this subject, and to publish all the documents we succeed in finding, whether in the Vatican or elsewhere. However, it is not too late yet; the year 1900 marks the 900th anniversary of the discovery of America by Leif Erikson, and this grandest and most momentous of events can be suitably *recognised* then, on the occasion of the

Paris Exposition, and suitably *celebrated* as soon afterwards as the extensive preparations will admit of. The first signal act, in the Twentieth Century, of all the nations styling themselves enlightened, should be to declare their intention publicly and officially of paying strict deference to historical truth thenceforth and for ever, and of abolishing the worship of false heroes and false gods.

Epoch-making as they are, the documents and manuscripts from which Dr. Jellic has already gleaned so much astonishing and invaluable information, more than sufficient in itself to completely recast the history of North America, and to compel, in face of the *facts*, all the utterly unfounded *theories* on the subject that have prevailed, to be discarded, — these records form but a small portion of those he has found in the Vatican Archives, and not as yet made known, even in private circles, and others still, in several of the capitals and other archive-centres of Europe, to which he holds the clues. It is indeed the labour of a lifetime to work this inexhaustible mine, and we have all three of us resolved to devote our lives to it, and to publish, in a large, universal manner, fully consonant with the international interests involved, the fruits of our united research. The Icelandic Sagas and codices now require to be re-studied and analysed by the aid of the Vatican clues, leading to the solution of many a problem and mystery; while the Icelandic records will, in turn, help out the purely ecclesiastical annals and reports. With ourselves in Copenhagen, pursuing the one branch of this research, and Dr. Jellic in Rome, Venice, or elsewhere, pursuing the other, with my husband's occasional participation in this branch also, and summing up the results of the double research, we can confidently hope to get to the bottom of even so deep a subject as this, certainly the most curiously involved and perplexing one that the world has ever grappled with.

Among the additional documents found by Dr. Jellic in the Vatican Archives are the following:—

Three Papal Bulls addressed to the Bishops of Gardar in Greenland (1326—1402).

Records dating from 1119, and from 1352.

Description of Norway and Greenland, especially the Monastery of St. Thomas at Gardar, 15th Century.

Report of an Archbishop of Drontheim to the Holy See, describing minutely the canonical visitation of that province, including Greenland, 14th and 15th Centuries.

Letter of Nicholas Germanus, dedicating the second edition of his Atlas to Pope Paul II., in which he gives his reasons for having inserted Greenland and Norway in the projection of Ptolemy.

Various cosmographic maps of the 15th century, anterior to the Columbian discovery, in which Greenland is given in two different projections, and more completely than in the facsimiles of Nordenskjöld. (Photographed by Dr. Jellic.)
Map of the World containing America, drawn probably in the time of Leo X. (Photographed by Dr. Jellic.)

Many documents of the 13th to 15th centuries, indirectly illustrating the subject, and multitudinous notes for further researches for new documents.

How full of promise, how suggestive, even the bare mention of these manuscripts! What effulgence will be shed by these upon a mental region wrapped in such gloom and mist, for centuries, that scarcely a contour could be discerned, or if discerned could be trusted as historically correct! To what an intimate acquaintance it will lead with the people who built up the Republics of Vinland and Greenland; what close sympathy with those who lost their independence, who were almost the first sufferers, of European descent, under a tyrannical home government and its prohibitive tariff, the first colonists of our race, who, utterly abandoned by their kin, fell in the struggle and became extinct! And yet they were able to bequeath their rich gains, as the discoverers and colonizers of North America, and on the strength of their double achievement Cabot became the founder of the British Colonial Empire, and the entire North American continent has remained in the possession of the descendants of the ancient Scandinavians!

From the two Papal Bulls already brought to its notice, the public will eagerly welcome all records of that sort that can be unearthed! The description of Norway and Greenland will prove very valuable, as well as that of the Monastery of St. Thomas, concerning which there is none save that in the Zeno narrative and its confirmation by Ivar Bardsen. A minute description of a canonical visitation in Greenland is the one thing of all others to settle disputed points and to supply the interesting details as to the life in those colonies which have always been lacking, even leading, as Dr. Jellic states,

into the charmed realms of folk-lore. The appetite for old maps, likewise, can never become sated, and here is the enticing prospect of several. If there is nothing new under the sun, there are certain old things, which when brought to the surface, have the power, figuratively speaking, of creating a new heaven and a new earth, of regenerating mankind in mind, and heart, and aims.

CHEXBRES, Switzerland, January 1899.

MARIE A. SHIPLEY

NÉE BROWN.

To be inserted at the last page of the brochure: "The Norse Colonization of America, by the Light of the Vatican Finds".

ADDENDUM.

Few words only are necessary to point out the bearings of the facts brought forward in the foregoing article by my wife, on the subsequent history of the North American Continent. It has constantly been asserted by historians, but without a shadow of proof, that the Norse voyages and colonization were utterly unknown or forgotten in Europe at the time of Columbus and Cabot. This can no longer be said. The Bull of 1492 takes up the thread dropped by that of 1448, and carries it on by the restoration of the Gardar Bishopric until 1540, when the Protestant religion was there established. It proves that the existence of Greenland, and of an adjacent continent peopled by large hordes of "barbarians", was known at Rome in 1491, before the first voyage of Columbus. That the position of Greenland was correctly known is shown by Ruyssel's map of 1508. The same knowledge had come to Rome immediately prior to 1448, as well as half a century earlier by the narrative of the brothers Zeno, which supplies names (e. g. Frislanda) used by Columbus himself and by Cosa, -1500. Zeno visited Greenland, and heard, not obscurely, of the American continent. All this definite information was regularly current at Venice and cannot therefore have been unknown to John Cabot, as a Venetian citizen, while it was certainly known to Columbus, and would naturally, as Francis Bacon points out, have more influence on the plans of both navigators than ancient legends about lost Atlantic continents, even though these last also were founded on actual fact, and had received confirmation from the more recent reports of which we have spoken.

Thus the chain of evidence is complete and unbroken, from the Norse discovery in or before A. D. 1000, through the resulting colonization, the ecclesiastical domination with its reports to and correspondence with Rome, the visit of Zeno, and the appeals of the Greenlanders, up to the voyages of 1492 and 1497. With the aid of Dr. Jelic and his researches we hope to elucidate this subject of the Norse and Cabot discoveries up to the period of the permanent colonization by the English. Dr. Jelic has been fortunate enough to find the original Ptolemy maps, long reputed lost, which also are of vital import to the subject, and will enable us to probe the question to its very roots. The whole matter is one of world-wide importance, for from the Cabot voyages, and not from those of Columbus, spring the present civilization of the United States and Canada, and their pre-eminence among the nations of the Western Hemisphere.

JOHN B. SHIPLEY.

SOME MORE DISCOVERERS OF THEIR PREDECESSORS' DISCOVERIES! AN EXPOSÉ OF THE PLOT.

It is only now, three months after my brochure was printed, and eight years after the American Commission, in 1891, issued their imperious decree: *Catholic Archives to be searched*, that I know fully the outcome of their operations. On p. 14 I stated that "the American Commissioners found nothing whatever, even at the Vatican". This was not quite correct, and yet my miss-shot hit the bull's eye. The Head of the Latin-American Department and his confrères found considerable. They found all of Dr. Jelic's Vatican finds, published prior to 1894, *en bloc*, but not in those archives, and not by his methods of research. That was far too slow, un-American, and too much trouble. They found his finds, in his Memoir of April 1891,⁽¹⁾ copies of which, through various channels, reached Washington at an early date, and—the alert ken and eager clutch of Mr. Wm. Eleroy Curtis.

It so happened that Monsignor O'Connell, then Rector of the American College in Rome, was one of the first to interest himself in the matter, after the reading of Dr. Jelic's paper at the Paris Congress, and offered to act as intermediary with Card. Gibbons and the American Catholic Historical Societies. Prof. Shahan, who was also present, conveyed the knowledge to the Catholic University in Washington. Nothing came of all this, at least nothing of the slightest benefit to Dr. Jelic. In June his Memoir was printed, and in July he himself wrote to Cardinal Gibbons, enclosing a copy, and later on sent three or four photographs of ancient documents and maps, both of which letters failed to elicit a reply. In August the Washington despatch to the *New York Sun*

(1) Compte-rendu du II^{me} Congrès Scientifique International des Catholiques tenu à Paris, du 1^{er} au 6^{me} Avril, 1891.

proclaimed that "Cardinal Gibbons had requested the proper officials of the several religious orders of the Catholic Church, both in Europe and America, to cause their Archives to be searched for historical records bearing on the discovery and settlement of the New World". (See my brochure, p. 13.)

"In the summer of 1892, Congress", to give Mr. Curtis' printed account,⁽²⁾ "passed a resolution requesting the Governments of Spain, France, Great Britain, the Pope of Rome, the Duke of Veragua and others, to loan for exhibition in the Convent of La Rabida at the World's Columbian Exposition, certain manuscripts, maps and printed volumes relating to the voyages of Columbus and the discovery and early settlement of America. It was my pleasant duty", adds Mr. Curtis, "to convey this request to the nations and persons named—". Consequently, he went to Rome, where, according to Revd. Franz Ehrle, S.J., Prefect of the Vatican Library, in an elaborate article⁽³⁾ on the net results of the Gibbons-Curtis initiative, he had an audience with the Pope, in which this enterprising American, and another, with such eminent qualifications, enhanced by his post of Papal Chamberlain of the Cape and Sword, as to have been instantly appointed agent, J. C. Heywood, Esq., jointly asked the Holy Father to contribute something from the matchless riches of his art-treasury and secret Archives. Mr. Curtis goes on to say that Card. Rampolla, "although he could not permit any original papers to be taken from the files of the Vatican, caused a thorough investigation to be made, and furnished a facsimile of every important or interesting document that could be found bearing upon the early history of America". *Every document!* That is to say, *all that ever could be found there!* "The work of investigation", according to Mr. Curtis' unimpeachable testimony, "was done under the direction of Mr. J. C. Heywood, a ripe and skillful scholar, who has devoted many years to the study of the history and policy of the Catholic Church, and who kindly consented to serve as the representative of the Department of State of the United States, in securing a historical exhibit from the Vatican". One engaged in so colossal a research-work, on such terribly short time, could not but have something to say about the treasures he had thus unearthed by magic, and Mr. Heywood thus describes them: "The facsimiles of documents relating to the early history of America here exhibited are taken from the famous series of

(²) Recent disclosures concerning Pre-Columbian Voyages to America in the Archives of the Vatican. By Wm. Eleroy Curtis. From the National Geographical Magazine, Vol. V, p. 197, etc. (1893).

(³) In "Stimmen aus Maria-Laach", April 1894, p. 367, etc.

the Papal Registers or letter-books. These are a collection of more than 12,000 volumes in folio, written partly on parchment and partly on paper, and are preserved in the secret Archives of the Holy See, at the Vatican Palace". The inference is that he went through the 12,000 volumes, in little over half a year!⁽⁴⁾ Father Ehrle, in his German counterpart to the Curtis pamphlet, affirms that "the result of the researches thus carried out in the 13,000 or so folio volumes of the Papal letter-books and Registers of Petitions gave brilliant confirmation to"—the Pope's *supposition* (?) on the strength of which, as it is made to appear, he graciously assented to the request. In fact, to give Ehrle's words, "no preliminary research in the Papal Archives was needed before giving this consent". Thus a pure act of faith, intuition, inspiration, and infallibility on the part of the aspirant for temporal power! It was *impossible* that Leo XIII. could have seen or heard of the reviews of Dr. Jelic's Paris memoir in his own official organ the *Osservatore Romano*, or that by Prof. Carlo Merkel in the *Revisita di Storia Italiana*; it was *impossible* that the slightest rumor of the remarkable finds relative to the Norse-American colonies that had been made by Dr. Jelic in the Vatican Archives ever since 1887 could have reached the unusually sensitive ears of this vigilant and alert old man! Munch's only worthy successor had been accomplishing more than Munch himself, after an interval of 40 or 50 years, and nothing whatever was known of it under the Vatican roof! Incredible! But doubt is inadmissible; we must believe all that we are told in this extraordinary matter!

The result was that 44 pages of Papal registers, from the 13th-15th centuries, were exhibited in the Convent of La Rabida, at Chicago, in photographic reproduction, at Mr. Heywood's expense, and as the Pope's own contribution, for which, and the rest of the Papal exhibit, the American Government defrayed the cost of transportation. A very limited edition was published, only 25 copies, which were sent to 25 of the principal libraries of the world.

Not the remotest hint does Mr. Curtis convey in his pamphlet of Dr. Jelic's existence, or of the finds that formed the body and soul of the reincarnated exhibition-volume "Documenta Selecta etc. etc." Father Ehrle does this great *savant* the meagre justice of barely referring to his memoir of 1891, and in reply to a recent imperative letter from Dr. Jelic, has grudgingly admitted that the latter *did* publish for the

(⁴) The Archives reopen on Oct. 1st: the reproduction was commenced in April 1893, and finished in May.

first time that remarkable bull of Alexander VI, dated 1492, which forms the gem of the Heywood research-trophy. Mr. Heywood has throughout maintained his *role* of total-eclipser, making no acknowledgement whatever to the man whose work he has appropriated.

Mr. Curtis, however, does seem most maliciously aware of my existence, which has obviously prompted the opening paragraph of his veracious pamphlet: "Several eminent Scandinavian scholars, and others who have made the early voyages of the Norsemen the subject of special study, have for years contended that the archives of the Vatican contained important evidence bearing upon the pre-Columbian discoveries of America. Some have even had the courage to assert that the legends and traditions of the Icelandic sagas would be established as facts if the records of the Church could be called as witnesses, while others have gone even still farther and have insisted that, through the secret aid of the pope, Columbus enjoyed full knowledge of the voyages of the Norsemen and the country they called Vinland the Good, and simply followed the course over which they had cruised across the ocean four hundred years before his birth. But until Leo XIII. came to the Vatican, no amount of argument or influence was able to unlock the mysterious manuscripts,⁽⁵⁾ which for eighteen hundred years have been accumulating upon the shelves of the Holy Sec. Some years ago a woman went to Congress and asked the passage of a resolution directing the President of the United States to use his influence with the pope to have them examined, but no notice was taken of her petition, and year after year applications from students and historians were made in vain. I was most assuredly that Congress for anything like *that*! But as I cannot doubt Mr. Curtis' word, of course I *must* have done this grotesquely absurd thing. His statement, however, is strangely at variance with my Plea (March, 1888), which, on the motion of Sen. Hoar, was ordered to be printed for the use of the Senate Committee, and is doubtless preserved in the Washington archives. As for the "eminent Scandinavian scholars", these were content to let the Norse discovery remain a half-myth, and the short-lived Norse settlements an episode that led to no results. A few Roman Catholic writers "contended that the archives of the Vatican contained important evidence bearing upon"—the *ecclesiastical* history of Vinland, proving the pre-Columbian hold of their church upon the country which

(5) Munch's finds in the Vatican Archives were published by the Norwegian Government in 1864! The Archives were freely thrown open to students in 1881.

was so manifestly destined for it. The "some" and "others" referred to by Mr. Curtis are *myself*, whom he thus splits up, in order to more easily crush. I have always "had the courage to assert", etc., and I "have gone even still farther and have insisted" on all that he specifies. Either he, or said "officers of the Church" gave a very queer twist to the facts, when they alleged that the archives "had not been disturbed for centuries", no! not until Mr. Heywood, after Congress had passed that resolution, and Mr. Curtis had gone to Rome, devoted his ripe scholarship to the ransacking of the "mysterious manuscripts which for 1800 years have been accumulating upon the shelves of the Holy See", even before there were Christians enough at Rome to make a meal for a self-respecting lion in the newly-erected Coliseum. His herculean task, bringing such remarkable revelations to the Pope as to the undreamed-of treasures of his own Archives, *before unknown*, brought also a very welcome result to Mr. Curtis, for, as he exults, "while the claims of the Scandinavian scholars" (as well as of "some" and "others") "were not sustained, and no evidence was disclosed to show that the discoveries and adventures of the Norsemen in America were ever known to the Church, or that Columbus obtained any information or assistance whatever from this source, there were brought to light several historical documents of the greatest value, relating to the settlement of Greenland and the propaganda of the church in the middle ages". With admirable consistency he thus declares on p. 198, that no evidence was disclosed to show that the Norse colonies were known to the church, and on page 217 he says: "While they furnish presumptive evidence that the existence of unexplored lands and savage races west of Greenland was known to the Church, they are equally strong proof that Columbus received no information or encouragement from them". Was known to the church! That is just what "some" and "others" have always maintained; likewise that Columbus possessed the same knowledge, and used "Asia" as a blind. But to prevent "some" and "others" from ever getting hold of these too-eloquent documents, which proved far too much, the only safe thing to do, as Dr. Jelic, most unfortunately for the opposition, had brought them to light, was to render them innocuous, pirate them from the historian and *savant* who had found a large number of them, and drawn very able deductions from all, convert them into an exhibition-article, a mere Papal relic for La Rabida, and label them: "*Of no historical value*".⁽⁶⁾

(6) See article by Prof. Chas. H. Haskins on the Vatican Archives in the American Historical Review, Oct. 1896.

The O'Connell-Gibbons-Curtis-U. S. Dept. of State-Heywood-Ehrle-Rampolla-Leo brotherhood, exercising the high prerogatives of Vaticanism, seized boldly Dr. Jelic's memoir of 1891, with all that it contained, using *his* references. Hence *he* is regarded as the pirate and plagiarist of the "Documenta Selecta" published in 1893 as the fruit of Heywood's original research, after the Archives had been flung wide in 1892 at the imperious command of Congress! And I am regarded as Dr. Jelic's accomplice in the historical fraud and imposture, in claiming for him the high merit of his finds, which explains the peculiar reception accorded to my brochure. *This* affront to the man whose greatest find, the identification of the original maps of Ptolemy of Alexandria, has just been published by the Government of Bosnia, and will shortly appear in German, a find which has been fully recognised by the Imperial Academy of Vienna, by such experts as Tomaschek and Bendorff, of Vienna, Hiller of Berlin, and by the British Museum—a find so splendid as to shed imperishable lustre upon the Vatican collections!

And what are we going to do?

I have *now*, within three feet of me, on a safe shelf, the entire series of Dr. Jelic's finds and collections, 37 numbers in all, including about sixty separate documents, 18 being in facsimiles which he has just had made at his own expense. Besides all his stolen property thus recovered, there are many documents referring to the Bishops of Gardar, the list of which was completed by Dr. Jelic in his memoir of 1894 at the Brussels Congress, and four most remarkable pre-Columbian maps, showing Greenland; very ancient ones, not existing in any other collection. In addition to his own original finds, and many more documents of which he has the traces, the complete collection will contain all the Vatican documents previously published which bear on Norse-American history from A. D. 1000 to 1540. This already forms the largest collection of pre-Columbian sources ever made; and when to this is added the Northern sources, consisting, in addition to the Sagas, of the Scandinavian historical and ecclesiastical annals, it will then be monumental.

These priceless documents we are calling upon the American Government to publish, in a fair, open, and honest manner, and as an atonement for the disgraceful transaction of 1892-93 to Dr. Jelic, who has thus collected and made available the most vital facts of early American history. If the people of the United States are not lost to all sense of national honor, they will see that this is done.

This grand subject is as truly the national property of England and Canada as of the United States, and they will not fail to set full value upon it. In its whole world-embracing scope, it becomes part of universal history.

CHEXBRES, Switzerland, April 1899.

MARIE A. SHIPLEY

née BROWN.