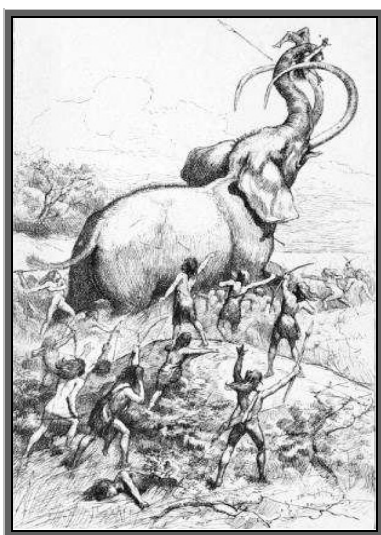


Children's Stories in American History

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By



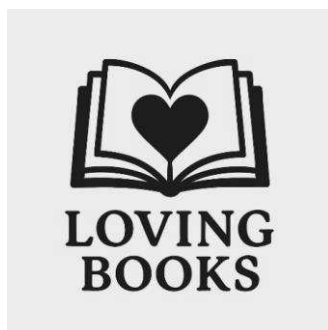
Henrietta Christian Wright

Illustrated by *J. Steeple Davis*

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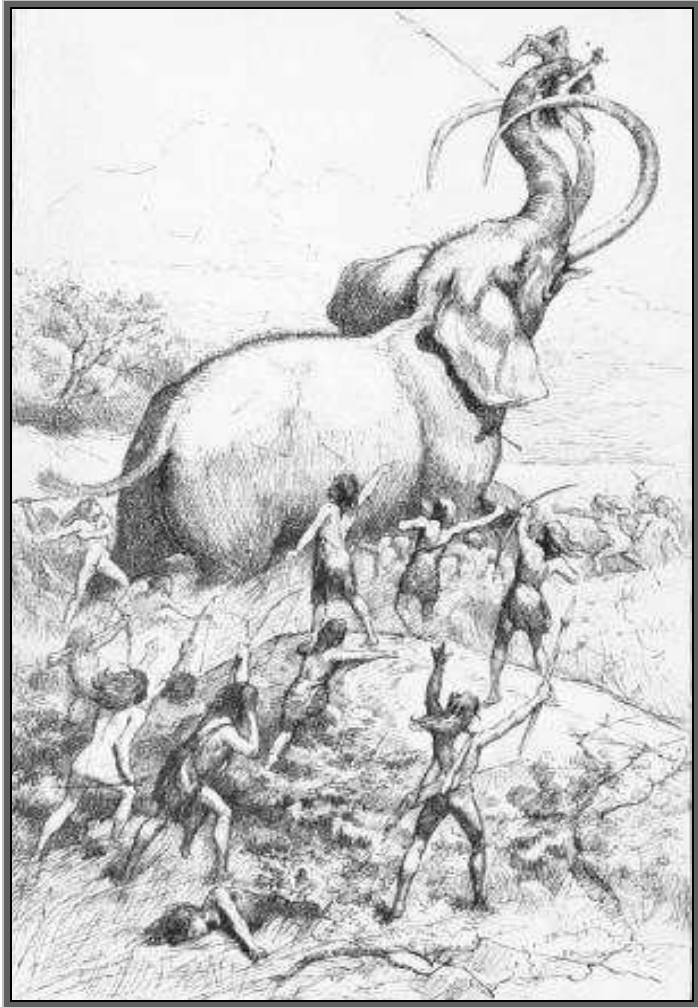
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CHILDREN'S STORIES IN AMERICAN HISTORY



A Mammoth Hunt

By

Henrietta Christian Wright

Illustrated by J. Steeple Davis

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CHAPTER I.

ANCIENT AMERICA.

Many ages ago in North America there was no spring or summer or autumn, but only winter all the time; there were no forests or fields or flowers, but only ice and snow, which stretched from the Arctic Ocean to Maryland. Sometimes the climate would grow a little warmer, and then the great glaciers would shrink toward the north, and then again it would grow cold, while the ice crept southward; but finally it became warmer and warmer until all the southern part of the country was quite free from the ice and snow, which could then only be seen, as it is now, in the Polar regions.

Ages and ages after this, grass and trees began to appear, and at last great forests covered the land, and over the fields and through the woods gigantic animals roved—strange and terrible-looking beasts, larger than any animal now living, and very fierce and strong. Among these were the mammoth and mastodon, which were so strong and ferocious that it would take hundreds of men to hunt and kill them. These great animals would go trampling through the forests, breaking down the trees and crushing the grass and flowers under their feet, or rush over the fields in pursuit of their prey, making such dreadful, threatening noises that all the other animals would flee before them, just as

now the more timid animals flee from the lion or rhinoceros. Sometimes they would rush or be driven by men into swamps and marshes, where their great weight would sink them down so deep into the mud that they could not lift themselves out again, and then, they would die of starvation or be killed by the arrows of the men who were hunting them.

Besides these mammoths and mastodons there were other animals living in North America at that time, very different from those that are found here now.

These were the rhinoceros, as large as the elephant of to-day, five different kinds of camels, thirty different kinds of horses, some of which had three toes, and some four, on each foot; and then there were a great many smaller animals which we no longer find here. Monkeys swung in the branches of the trees, just as they do now in other parts of the world, and great, strange birds went flying through the air and built their nests in the trees which, ages ago, crumbled away to dust.

But at last all these curious animals vanished from the forests of North America—all, that is, except the reindeer, which is still found in the far north—and the only reason we have for knowing that they really lived here is that their bones have been found in the soil.

Among mountains far from the sea are often found the shells of sea-animals, and the imprints of fishes in the rocks,

and so we know those animals must once have lived there, and in the same way when the bones of the mammoth and mastodon, and camel and rhinoceros, are found, we also know that they must have lived here too, although it was so long ago that nobody knows very much about it.

Among these bones have been found human bones also, and tools, and arrow-heads of flint; so it is supposed that there was a race of people living in North America at the same time. But who these people were, or where they came from, or whither they went, we shall probably never know, for they have vanished as utterly from the New World as have the fairies and nymphs and giants from the Old World, and will always remain a mystery.

CHAPTER II.

THE MOUND-BUILDERS.

About two thousand years ago there lived a very curious people in North America known as the Mound-builders. Where they came from no one knows, but it is supposed that they were either descendants of people from Japan, who had been driven across the Pacific by storms, and washed on the western coast of America, or that they originally came from Asia by the way of Behring Strait. Many people suppose them to have been the descendants of the Shepherd Kings, who journeyed from Central India to Egypt about the time of the building of the Tower of Babel; they were called the Shepherd Kings because they were shepherds, and came down into Egypt driving their flocks before them. Here they conquered the country and made themselves kings; they built many wonderful temples, and founded Heliopolis, the City of the Sun, in honor to their great god, the Sun, whom they worshipped, under the name of Osiris; Isis, the moon, being their chief goddess. It was supposed that Osiris dwelt in the body of the sacred bull Apis, and therefore this bull was adored as a god. He lived in a splendid temple, the walls of which shone with gold and silver, and sparkled with gems and precious stones brought from India and Ethiopia; it was the duty of the priests to wait upon him with the greatest care, and he was always fed from golden dishes. At the time of the rising of the Nile

there was always a festival to Apis, when he was displayed to the people covered with the richest and finest embroidered cloths, and surrounded by troops of boys singing songs to him. If he lived twenty-five years he was drowned in a sacred fountain, but if he died before that time all Egypt went into mourning, which continued until a new Apis was found. The successor must be a perfectly black calf, with a square white spot on the forehead, the figure of an eagle upon the back, a crescent on the side, and a beetle on the tongue. Of course these marks were made by the priests, but the people did not know that, and supposed that the soul of Apis had passed into this calf, which they received with great joy.

The Egyptians worshipped many other animals besides the sacred bull; the dog, wolf, hawk, crocodile, and cat were all considered gods, and any one who might kill one of these animals, even by accident, was punished with death. When a cat died every one in the family cut off his eyebrows, and when a dog died the whole head was shaven. And if on their journeys the Egyptians found the dead body of a cat or dog, they always brought it home and embalmed it with great care. The reason why the Egyptians revered these animals was, that they believed that the soul of man, after his death, passed into the bodies of different animals, and that after three thousand years it would return and inhabit a human form again, so, of course, they did not look upon a cat or dog as we do, merely as an animal to be petted or used, but they thought that in this animal dwelt the soul of

some human being, and hence it was sacred to them. One of the great gods of Egypt was the River Nile; and no wonder that they worshipped it, as it was to them the means of life. It never rains in Egypt, and the land would be like a desert were it not for the overflowing of the Nile. Once a year this great river, swollen by the waters that have poured into it from the lake country above, overflows its banks, watering the country on either side of it, and leaving, when it recedes, a deposit of rich mud upon the land; then the people sow and plant, sure of a good harvest. Up and down the Nile Valley extends a chain of rocky mountains, and these the Egyptians used as places of burial. The tombs, or catacombs, as they are called, are ornamented with pictures and sculptures which may be seen to this day. The subjects of these paintings were always taken from life. People were represented planting, sowing, and reaping, spinning, weaving, sewing, washing, dressing, and playing. Even the games of children were shown in these tombs, and the balls and dolls and toys with which they played. Would you not feel strange to stand in one of these catacombs and see the figure of a doll carved in the rock, and to know that it is the tomb of some little Egyptian girl who died three thousand years ago? The games which children play to-day are not new, and when you have a game of ball or top or leap-frog, when you play with your dolls, or sit down and tell each other fairy stories, you are only doing the same thing that the little Egyptian and Grecian boys and girls did thousands of years

ago; it makes them seem like real children to think that, doesn't it?

But different as the Egyptian religion was from ours, there was one thing which they believed which we also believe in, the resurrection of the dead; and as to-day we symbolize this belief by pictures of the lily, the egg, the butterfly, and other objects, so the Egyptians used the lotus, which bloomed on the waves of the Nile, opening every morning and closing every night, as the symbol of the resurrection, and we find this flower, carved in stone, used as an ornament all throughout Egypt.

Of all the works of the ancient Egyptians, the greatest are the pyramids, the tombs of the kings; these were mostly built during the reigns of the Shepherd Kings.

After a long time, perhaps five or six hundred years, the ancient inhabitants of Egypt drove out the Shepherd Kings. It is supposed then that they crossed back to Asia, wandering through that country from the south to the north, spending some time in Siberia, where they built mounds like those in our own country, then crossing Behring Strait they reached North America, wandered down the Mississippi Valley, building mounds and temples, journeyed through Mexico, where are found some of the most remarkable of these remains, and so on across the Isthmus of Panama into Peru, where at the time of the conquest of that country by the Spaniards the sun and moon were worshipped as gods, just

as had been done in Egypt thousands of years before, and where was found a magnificent temple of the sun, the inside walls of which were covered almost entirely of gold. So you see the reason why it is thought that *perhaps* the mound-builders were descendants of the Shepherd Kings is that these mounds and temples are like those found in the old world. In Mexico and Peru all the great buildings were made in the pyramidal form, while, as I have said, in Siberia have been found mounds like those in the United States.

Some of the most curious of these mounds are found in the State of Ohio. One, in the form of a serpent, with the tail ending in a triple coil, is very curious. It is about a thousand feet long and extends along a bluff which rises above Brush Creek, in Adams County, Ohio. The neck of the serpent is stretched out and slightly curved over, and in its mouth is another mound in the form of an egg.

Many of these mounds, from their shapes, it is thought, were used for fortifications, and sometimes they are at regular spaces apart, which shows they may have been used for sending signals across the country. They were made almost entirely of earth, but sometimes brick and stone were used. Sometimes they were built very high, and on the tops of these highest mounds have been found pieces of burned wood, showing that they were probably used as places of worship, and that the priests offered up burnt-offerings and sacrifices there. The mounds are sometimes in the form of animals and men. In those that were used as places of wor-

ship human bones have been found, and with them many things which show that the Mound-builders must have known some of the arts which the tribes who lived in America at the time of its discovery by the Europeans knew nothing of; among these things are carvings in stone, pottery, articles of ornament in metal, silver and copper tools, such as axes, chisels, and knives, beside beads, bracelets, carved pipes, models in clay of birds, quadrupeds, and human faces, etc.

Is it not strange to think of this race of people who lived here in our own America so many years ago? We would like to know how they lived, what they looked like, and what language they spoke, but we cannot even guess. We only know that ages after the time of the Mammoth and Mastodon, this curious race, coming doubtless from the East, entered the Mississippi Valley; that they settled there and built those wonderful mounds at least two thousand years ago, if not longer; that finally they disappeared, and we should never have known of them but for the works they have left.

CHAPTER III.

THE RED MEN.

*W*hen America was first discovered by the whites, all

the country along the Atlantic coast from Maine to Florida was peopled by a dark-skinned people different from any known to Europeans. They were tall, with black or hazel eyes, and straight, black hair. Some of them were mild and friendly toward the whites, but others were very warlike and hated the white men for coming to live in their own woodland homes. They never lived very long in one place, but roamed about here and there, living by hunting, fishing, and sometimes planting corn, beans, pumpkins, etc. Their houses, or wigwams, as they called them, were made of bark, or skins, or matting, stretched on poles driven in the ground, and an Indian village was simply a great many tents in one spot, in the largest of which the chief always lived. These little villages were nothing like those which you would see now, scattered up and down the Atlantic coast, where all kinds of people live together; but each village was the home of one particular family or tribe of Indians, and it was very much as if you and all your brothers and sisters, your uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, nieces, grandmothers, grandfathers, great-grandmothers, great-grandfathers, and everybody else who was the least bit in the world relation to you, lived altogether in one little town by yourselves. Each tribe took some animal for its symbol, or *totem*, as they called it,

such as the turtle, bear, or wolf, and they believed that the spirit of the animal chosen watched over them and protected them. Like the ancient Egyptians, they believed that the soul of man passed at his death into the body of some other man or of some animal, and they drew signs from the flight of the birds and the shapes of the clouds. They worshipped the sun, which they said was the symbol of the Great Spirit, and they believed that the moon could weave charms. They believed also that the wind and the stars, the streams and the lakes, the great trees and the beautiful flowers, all had spirits. And little Indian boys and girls never went to school as you do, to learn about history and geography, but their school was out in the shady woods at their mother's feet, where they sat and listened to the beautiful stories of Hiawatha, the son of the West Wind, who had been sent among them to clear their rivers, forests, and fishing-grounds, and to teach them the arts of peace; of his wife, Minnehaha, Laughing Water, who sat by the doorway of her wigwam, plaiting mats of flags and rushes when Hiawatha came to woo her; of Minnehaha's father, the old arrow-maker, who made arrow-heads of jasper and chalcedony, and of the brave, beautiful, and gentle Chibiabos, the best of all musicians, who sang so sweetly that all the warriors and women and children crept at his feet to listen, and who made from hollow reeds flutes so mellow and musical that at the sound the brook ceased to murmur in the woodland, the birds stopped singing, the squirrel ceased chattering, and the rabbit sat up to listen. And the bluebird and robin and whip-

poorwill begged Chibiabos that he would teach them to sing as sweetly, but he could not, for he sang of the things they could not understand, of peace and love and freedom and undying life in the Islands of the Blessed.



THE TEACHING OF AN INDIAN CHILD.

And then, too, the Indian mothers would tell their children the story of Wabun, the East Wind, who brought the morning to the earth, and chased away the darkness with his silver arrows, whose cheeks were crimson with the sunrise, and whose voice awoke the deer and the hunter; and yet, although the birds sang to him, and the flowers sent up their perfume to greet him, and "though the forests and rivers sang and shouted at his coming," still he was not happy, for he was alone in heaven. But one morning while the villages were still sleeping, and the fog lay on the rivers, Wabun, looking downward, saw a beautiful maiden walking all alone in a meadow, gathering water-flags and rushes. And each day after that the first thing he saw was the maiden's eyes, which looked like two blue lakes among the rushes, and he loved the beautiful maiden and wooed her with the sunshine of his smile, and whispered to her in the gentle breezes which sang through the trees, and at last he drew her to him and changed her to a star, and then he was no longer sad, but happy, for he was no longer alone in heaven, but with him was his bride, the beautiful Wabun-Annung, the Morning Star.

And then the story of Kabibonokka, the North Wind, who dwelt among the icebergs and snow-drifts in the land of the White Rabbit; the North Wind, who in autumn "painted all the trees with scarlet and stained the leaves with red and yellow," and who drove the birds down to the land of the South Wind, ere he froze the rivers and lakes and ponds and sent the snow-flakes through the forest.

And the story of Shawondassee, the South Wind, who dwelt in the land of summer, who sent the bluebirds and the robins and the swallows; and the smoke from his pipe

"Filled the sky with haze and vapor,

Filled the air with dreamy softness,

Gave a twinkle to the water,

Touched the rugged hills with smoothness,

Brought the tender Indian Summer

To the melancholy north-land."

And the South Wind had also his trouble, for he loved a maiden whom he saw one day standing on the prairies, clothed in bright green garments, and with hair like sunshine; but he did not try to woo the maiden, but only sighed and sighed, until one morning behold he saw that her yellow hair had grown white, and the air seemed full of snow-flakes which rose from the earth and were wafted away by the wind; for, after all, it was not a maiden that the South Wind had loved, but only a prairie dandelion, whose petals had turned to down and floated away. Do you not think these Indian children learned pleasant things in their school? There was one story which they liked very much, and which you may also hear. It was the Legend of the Red Swan, and it told of an Indian warrior, who with his three brothers went out to shoot, and each one said that he would kill no other

animal except the kind he was used to killing. The warrior had not gone far before he saw a bear, which he shot, although he should not have done so, as he was not in the habit of killing bears. But as he was skinning the dead bear, the air all around him turned red, and he heard a strange noise in the distance; he followed the noise and found it came from a beautiful red swan, which was sitting far out in a lake, and whose plumage glittered in the sun like rubies, and although the Indian warrior tried very hard to shoot the swan with his magic arrows, still he could not kill it, for it rose and flapped its wings and flew slowly away toward the setting sun.

All these stories and many others, of war and hunting and bravery, did these dusky children of the Western World listen to eagerly. And when an Indian boy wished to excel his friends and become their leader, he did not take his books and study algebra or geometry or Latin, for they had no such books; he did not even try to be best in a game of cricket or ball, or to be a good oarsman, but he would train his eye so he could shoot a bird on the wing so far up in the sky that one could scarcely see it; he would train his muscle so that he could fight hand to hand with bears and wild-cats if need be; he would learn to find the trail of an enemy through the deep forest, guided only by the bent twigs or broken leaves, and he would be able to send his arrow straight through the heart of the deer which bounded over the precipices and mountains. And the little Indian girls would learn of their mothers how to prepare skins of animals and make mocca-

sins and garments out of them; how to ornament belts and leggings with shells and beads and feathers; how to plant corn and cook the food. And do you want to know how the Indian babies were taken care of? They were fastened so tightly in their queer little cradles that they could not move. The cradles were made in such a manner that they could be carried on the mother's back, or hung in a tree, or placed on the ground. If the Indian babies grew tired of being left all alone in this way, no one minded them; they might cry and cry, but no one paid any attention, for their mothers believed in teaching them patience in this way.

The Indians were very fond of games; they used to play ball and have famous ball matches on the ground in summer and on the ice in winter; and then they had races and liked shooting at targets, just as you do now. The game of lacrosse, which is played so much in Canada, is an Indian game, as is also tobogganing and snow-shoeing.

In the winter the Indians travelled from place to place on their snow-shoes; these were made of maple-wood and deer's hide, and fastened on the feet by pieces of deer's hide, and upon these curious shoes the Indians could travel very fast, sometimes forty miles a day, when hunting the deer and moose. Each tribe of Indians had its own peculiar kind of snow-shoe, and one Indian meeting another in the forest could tell by the totem tattooed on the breast and by the pattern of the snow-shoe to what tribe he belonged, and whether he were friend or foe.

They used to travel by water in their graceful birch-bark canoes; these were made by stripping off the bark from a birch tree and fastening it whole around the frame of cedar. Some of the canoes were very long and could carry ten or twelve men. Every little Indian boy and girl could manage his canoe with the greatest ease, either sitting or standing, and long hours they spent in them, paddling on the lakes and fishing in the shadow of the mountains.

The Red Men were a very poetical people, and the names which they gave to their mountains and lakes and rivers were often very fanciful. Many of these we have kept, as Mississippi, the Father of Waters; Minnehaha, Laughing Water; Canadarauga, The Smile of the Great Spirit; Housatonic, Winding Waters; Horicon (the Indian name for Lake George), Silver Water; Ohio, Fair to Look Upon, etc.

The names of the months were also very poetical and pretty; the Indians did not divide the years into months, but moons, and instead of saying last month, or next month, they would say at the time of the last moon, or the next moon, and their weeks were called from the changes in the moon, when it was new or quarter or full. April was the Moon of Bright Nights; May, the Moon of Leaves; June, the Moon of Strawberries; September, the Moon of Falling Leaves; November, the Moon of Snow-shoes, etc.

And besides they had their own names for all the wonderful and curious things in the heavens; thus the Milky Way

was the Pathway of Ghosts; the Northern Lights, the Death Dance of the Spirits; the Rainbow was the Heaven of the Flowers, where they all blossomed again after fading on the earth, and the shadows on the moon were the body of an old woman who had been thrown there by her grandson.

Their picture-writing was very curious and interesting. The legend relates that Hiawatha taught the Indians this art, so that they might be able to remember their history better, and also be able to send messages to one another. In this picture-writing the Great Spirit, Gitche Manito, was painted as an egg, with four points, extending north, south, east, and west, which meant that the Great Spirit was everywhere. Mitche Manito, the Evil Spirit, was represented as a great serpent; Life was shown by a light circle, Death by a black circle; a straight line meant the Earth, and a bow above it the Sky; foot-prints going toward a wigwam meant an invitation, but uplifted red hands were a sign of war.

The Indians also knew, or thought they did, what all the cries of the different animals meant, and they believed that these animals could understand them if they spoke to them. The bear was the favorite animal among the Indians and was used most frequently as a totem, and they had a belief that there was a very large bear living somewhere in the woods, naked all over except a spot of white hair on its back, which was more ferocious than any common bear, and they used to frighten their children by saying, "Hush, the naked bear will hear you, be upon you, and devour you." And the little

Indian boys and girls were just as afraid of this naked bear as you are afraid of ghosts and hobgoblins and witches. It is true they never actually saw the naked bear, but then neither have you ever seen a ghost.

The Indians were a very warlike people, the different tribes were almost always at war, and sometimes for years at a time. In preparing for battle they used to paint their bodies in very bright colors, called war-paint, and dress their heads with feathers; then all the warriors of the tribe would assemble for a feast, which was followed by a war-dance. A painted post would be driven into the ground, and the Indians would dance in a circle around it, brandishing their hatchets and screaming and shouting in a hideous manner. The night would be spent in this way, and then the Indians would take off their finery and go silently through the woods to the place where they knew the enemy to be. They did not fear death, as they believed that a brave warrior went as soon as he died to the Happy Hunting Grounds, where he would live forever, and they always buried the dead man's weapons with him, as it was supposed he would need them there.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NORTHMEN.

*I*n the far north there is an island so cold and dreary that from time immemorial it has been called Iceland—the land of ice and snow and frosts. Here are no spreading forests or fields of flowers, but only here and there hardy evergreens and a few pale blossoms, that come, perhaps, just to show how beautiful the place might become if only the short Icelandic summer lasted as long as the sunny months farther south. All around the rocky, frozen shores break the white waves of the Northern Ocean, and in the summer one may see the great icebergs sailing past, and hear the voices of the birds that have come northward for a little visit.

In the winter the days are so short and the cold is so intense that the children are almost shut off from out-door life, and are glad to take up with in-door games and plays. But they are very happy in spite of this, for they are a healthy, sturdy race, and like the ice and cold and snow. In the long winter evenings they gather around the fire and listen to the old stories that have been told in their land for hundreds of years, the stories of Odin and Thor and Baldur, for long, long ago the religion of the Northmen was very different from what it is now. Then they believed not in one god but many, of whom Odin was the chief, who dwelt in Valhalla, the Northmen's heaven. And no one could enter

there who had not died fighting, which made the Norse heroes very anxious to die in battle. Perhaps you will remember this god better when you hear that one of the days of the week is named after him, for Wednesday means Woden's day, and Woden was only another name for Odin. Thursday is also named after one of the Norse gods, the great Thor, called the thunderer, who held a mighty hammer in his hand which no one else could lift, and of whom every one was afraid. But of all their gods the people loved best Baldur, the beautiful; they called him the fair white god, and not only was he beloved by the people but all things in nature loved him and had promised never to harm him, all things, that is, excepting the mistletoe. One day there was a great company gathered together, and they all agreed to shoot arrows at Baldur just to prove that nothing could hurt him; so they shot arrows of oak and hemlock and pine, and they threw great stones at him, but he remained unharmed amid it all, for all things loved him and refused to do him injury; and Baldur smiled upon the people and they raised their hands above their heads and vowed that they would worship him forever. And now entered Hoerder, an evil spirit, who had found out the secret of the mistletoe; he asked permission to shoot an arrow at Baldur, and took up one made of the mistletoe, the one thing in the world that could harm the beautiful god. Hoerder took aim and the arrow sped on its way, and thus died Baldur the beautiful, by the hand of Hoerder the evil one. And the people mourned for him, and all things in nature wept over the death of the fair

white god. And when hundreds of years had passed away, and the people had ceased to believe in Odin and Thor they still loved the memory of Baldur; and when they listened to the story of Christ and his death on the cross, they said He was like the beautiful one who had been slain by Hoerder; so the priests, to please the people, twined the cross with mistletoe, and to this day at Christmastime little English children, descendants of the fierce Norse rovers, gather the mistletoe, together with the holly and evergreen, and all bright and beautiful things, and deck the churches with them in honor of the birth of Him who came to destroy evil, and to bring peace on earth and good-will to men. And thus the name of Baldur lives, for the memory of the good can never die, but lives forever in the heart, even as the stars forever shine in heaven.

Besides the old stories of their gods, the people of these North countries have many other tales they relate of things which actually happened. Living so near the ocean, they were, of course, great sailors, and often went off on long voyages, which lasted sometimes a year or two. In the old histories of Iceland we read that Erik the Red, as he was called, being unjustly treated by his neighbors, resolved to leave Iceland and seek a home elsewhere. So he gathered his friends together and took ship and sailed away boldly toward the west. No one then knew that there was any land west of Iceland, so many of his friends expected never to see him again. But Erik was a brave sailor and kept sailing on and on, still westward, until one day he did see land, and then