historian. “ There was yet no use of the marinrs compasse, wherefore Floco leaving Hietlandia, tooke certayne ravens unto him ; and when hee thought hee had sayled a great way, he sent forth one raven, which flying aloft, went backe againe to Hietlandia, which she saw behind. Whereupon Floco perceiving that he was yet neerer to Heitlandia then other countryes, and therefore couragiously going forward, he sent forth another raven, which, because she could see no land, neither before nor behind, light unto the ship again. But, lastly, the third raven was sent forth by Floco, and hav­ing for the most part performed his voyage, through the sharpnesse of her quicke sight attayned the land, she speedily flew thither, whose direction Floco following, beheld first the eastern side of the iland.”

The vessels of the Saxon marauders are described by Charnock in the following terms : “ The keel of their large flat-bottomed boats was framed of light timber, but the sides and upper works consisted only of wicker, with a covering of strong hides. The Saxon boats drew so little water, that they could easily proceed four score or an hundred miles up the great rivers ; the weight was so inconsiderable, that they were transported on waggons from one river to another ; and the pirates who had entered the mouth of the Seine or the Rhine might descend with the rapid stream of the Rhone into the Mediterranean.”

This description of the skin-covered boats of the northern seas is founded on testimony which cannot be disputed. And, if they were used by the Northmen on their longer voyages, it was probably when they purposed incursions into the interior of the countries they were about to devas­tate ; but that they must have had another and a far superior description of vessel, there can be no reason to doubt.

The investigations of the Royal Society of Northern An­tiquarians at Copenhagen have thrown considerable light on the subject of this early navigation, and of the disco­veries of the Scandinavians in the west; and we can no longer suppose that it was in these coracles that frequent voyages were made to Newfoundland, and colonics establish­ed there, which it appears proved that there were even as early as the tenth century. But to recur to evidence which is familiar to us. We have the description given by Cæsar of the ships of the Gaulish Veneti. “ Their bottoms were somewhat flatter than ours, their prows were very high and erect, as likewise their sterns, to bear the hugeness of the billows and the violence of the tempests. The body of the vessel was entirely of oak. The benches of the rowers were made of strong beams about a foot in breadth, and fastened with iron nails an inch thick, Instead of cables, they se­cured their anchors with chains of iron ; and made use of skins and a sort of thin pliant leather, by way of sails, pro­bably because they imagined that canvass sails were not so proper to bear the violence of tempests, the rage and fury of the winds, and to govern ships of that bulk and burthen.

Neither could our ships injure them with their beaks,

so great was their strength and firmness, nor could we easily throw our darts, because of their height above us, which also was the reason that we found it extremely difficult to grapple the enemy and bring them to close fight.” And again, speaking of the manner in which these ships were eventually taken possession of : “ They,” the Romans, “ had provided themselves with long poles, armed with long scythes ; with these they laid hold of the enemies’ tackle, and drawing off the galley by the extreme force of oars, cut asunder the ropes that fastened the sailyards to the masts ; these giving way, the sailyards came down, insomuch that as all the hopes and expectations of the Gauls depended en­tirely on their sails and rigging, by depriving them of this resource we at the same time rendered their vessels wholly unserviceable.”

The account proceeds to state, that many attempted to escape from this unforeseen means of aggression ; but that

the wind falling, and a perfect calm coming on, they were obliged to remain inactive on the water, and were token possession of, one after the other, by the simultaneous at­tack of several Roman galleys. It would appear from this that they were vessels only intended for sailing, and that since oars were used, from the mention made of seats for the rowers, they could have been as very partial accessories to the sails, or probably even only for steering. Another fact is mentioned by Cæsar, that the Veneti sailed from their port to meet the Roman fleet, and several of the vessels escaped to their port from the fleet. This, though not con­clusive of the fact of sailing on a wind, is worthy of notice.

It is probable that it was ships such as these which brought Hengist and Horsa to England about the middle of the fifth century, since it is recorded that their force, which con­sisted of 1500 men, found accommodation in only three ves­sels. It is hardly to be imagined that the coracles or skin- boats of the northern nations were ever of sufficient dimen­sions to accommodate a force of 500 men, with arms and means of active aggression.

In the course of little more than a century from the first invasion of Hengist and Horsa, England became quietly subject to Saxon rule ; and the prosperity incidental to a state of peace made her again a fit object of prey to new hordes of northern pirates, the Danes. But it is useless to dwell long on these times of historical doubt and inac­curacy. In the words of Milton, “ These bickerings to re­cord, what more worth is it than to chronicle the wars of kites or crows, flocking and fighting in the air.”

At length order once more asserted her right to control men’s actions, and out of order the arts and wants of civi­lization began again to dawn in the newly-formed states which had arisen from the wreck of the empires of anti­quity. Man then saw that peace ministered to his com­fort, and he turned his thoughts to commerce rather than to the sword, as a means of gratifying his newly-acquired cravings. Thus a long period did not elapse before those seas, which had for centuries been tracked only by the bark of the lawless marauder, bore on their surface the well- freighted craft of the peaceful and industrious merchant.

The earlier irruptions of the northern barbarians into Italy had desolated the Roman province of Venetia, and driven a remnant of its inhabitants to the refuge afforded by the small marshy islands at the extremity of the Adri­atic. There they are described by Cassiodorus, who assi­milates them to water-fowl, as subsisting on fish, and steep­ed in poverty, their only manufacture and their only com­merce being salt. From such humble beginnings arose the state destined to connect the old world with the new, and to lead the van of modem commercial and maritime enterprise. The mercantile prosperity of Venice diffused its influence throughout the shores of the Mediterranean, which thus became once again the nursery of civilization. For many centuries Venice was the great school for the arts connected with navigation, and her shipwrights and seamen were long the most instructed in Europe. While the north­ern seas were navigated by the Scandinavian sea-kings, in their rude and frail boats, in quest of plunder or of a home, ships floated on the waters of the Mediterranean bearing the banner of St Mark, which, it is said, were, even as early as the tenth century, of the burthen of 1200 up to 2000 tons. The vessels, however, generally adopted by the Medi­terranean states, were either copies or modifications of the ancient galley.

It is a fact worth notice, that while the continuation of the use of this species of vessel in the comparatively tranquil wa­ters of the Mediterranean fostered the arts of commerce and navigation, its introduction into the northern seas, to which it was ill adapted, appears to have checked, in a most re­markable degree, the maritime enterprise which had hither­to so characterized the population of their coasts. It is