

centuries: now at last they found new worlds to conquer. It was not that they had never heard of Gaul and Britain, but that they had not been induced or emboldened to venture so far in small parties for the sake of robbery under arms.

What, then, was the reason, or occasion, of this sudden outburst? Steenstrup thought that overpopulation, through polygamy, had made emigration necessary: but the earlier raids were not emigration; and K. Maurer argued that Harald Fairhair's attempts to check emigration showed that Norway was not too crowded. J. R. Green, in his *Conquest of England*, suggested that as the unification of the small Scandinavian kingdoms had already begun, the more independent spirits preferred adventure and exile to alien rule; adding that it is needless to look further for a reason than the hope of plunder. But attempts at unification had begun long before this period in Denmark and Sweden, and in Norway Harald Fairhair's domination came after the Viking Age had already set in. The hope of plunder was no doubt the motive, but why should this date stand as the moment when such hopes were formed? Others have supposed that heathendom was making reprisals for Charlemagne's war on the Saxons; but this idea involves a solidarity among the Scandinavians, and a sentiment of religion, wholly foreign to all we know of them. The Viking raids may have been prompted partly by hate of the Christian invader, but they were not analogous to the Crusades; they simply meant that the people of the Baltic awoke to the possibility of successful