

nuns: trampling the holy places, throwing down the altars, pillaging the treasures. "Some of the monks they killed; a large number they carried away captive; the greater part they thrust out stripped and insulted; a few were drowned." The witness of the chroniclers is confirmed by a letter of Alcuin's of 794, showing that the news reached the Continent and created no little panic. But the extraordinary circumstance is that the landing was made on the 8th of January. It is true that the North Sea is sometimes sunny and calm in the depth of winter, but this had been a particularly stormy season. Later Vikings chose the summer for their excursions, and *sumarlidi*, "summer-sailor," was synonymous with "pirate." Cattle and sheep, in that age, were slaughtered in autumn, and only a few stock beasts kept to be fed on hay through the winter; so that the flocks and herds on Lindisfarne (*jumenta, oves et boves*) could not have been more than sufficed for the *strandhögg*, the slaughter by the shore, for the feast which was the usual finish to a raid. The raiders had not come for cattle, but for gold and slaves; they knew where to get what they wanted—at a rich monastery on an island to which help from the surrounding country would be slow in coming; and they knew what to do with the slaves when they had captured them. We are told that Scandinavia was over-populated, and even if that was not the case, it was hardly necessary to import labour into Denmark, still less into Norway; a monk or a nun from England would be little use on a fell-side farm in Hardanger or Sogn. There must have been recognised markets in Flanders