

poetical ideas contained so large a kernel of observation that our fathers may be said to have possessed a remarkably clear conception of the true nature of things. How soberly and correctly they observed may best be seen a couple of hundred years later in *Kongespeilet* ("The Mirror of Kings"), the most scientific treatise of our ancient literature, where it is said that "as soon as one has traversed the greater part of the wild sea, one comes upon such a huge quantity of ice that nowhere in the whole world has the like been known. Some of the ice is so flat that it looks as if it were frozen on the sea itself; it is from 8 to 10 feet thick, and extends so far out into the sea that it would take a journey of four or more days to reach the land over it. But this ice lies more to the northeast or north, beyond the limits of the land, than to the south and southwest or west. . . .

"This ice is of a wonderful nature. It lies at times quite still, as one would expect, with openings or large fjords in it; but sometimes its movement is so strong and rapid as to equal that of a ship running before the wind, and it drifts against the wind as often as with it."

This is a conception all the more remarkable when viewed in the light of the crude ideas entertained by the rest of the world at that period with regard to foreign climes.

The strength of our people now dwindled away, and