

A still older one, who wrote at a time when the distance between the two continents had not yet been ascertained, exclaimed in the course of his "Voyages from Asia to America": "This is certain, that the Tschuktschi get Cloaths of Martins Skins from hence [*i.e.* from America]; some such have now and then been brought from Anadirskoi [an island in the Gulf of Anadyr] to Jak-tzk, as is known to every Person thereabouts".¹

Lastly, Sir George Simpson, the celebrated Hudson's Bay Company magnate of the first half of the nineteenth century, tells us that the object of a certain expedition he speaks of "was to occupy the country by posts in order to protect the trade from the Tchuktchi of Siberia, who cross the straits every summer to traffic with the American Indians, carrying their furs, ivory, etc., to the fair of Ostrovnoye".²

Just think of it! The commercial relations between the natives of Asia and America so frequent that they disturb the equanimity of such powerful traders as the Hudson's Bay Company people!

And no wonder. For it stands to reason that, especially among primitive and more or less nomadic races, a sheet of water the opposite shores of which can be seen with the naked eye by any one standing on either of them can be no serious impediment to intercourse.³ And if such a passage is commonly effected for the sake of gratifying one's cupidity or whims, it is at least as possible in cases of personal or national necessity.

And yet we hear a writer of the weight of Dr. H. Rink, the foremost Protestant missionary to the Eastern Eskimos, declare in no uncertain accents that "il est *tout-à-fait impossible* que des peuplades disposant exclusivement de pirogues du genre de celles dont font usage les habitants de l'Australie et des îles de la Polynésie aient pu faire le trajet d'Asie en Amérique, à une latitude aussi boréale que l'est celle des régions où les côtes du Nouveau Monde et de l'Ancien sont le plus rapprochées".⁴

The italics are his, and render his declaration all the more difficult to reconcile with a common sense view of the question. Why, the natives of Australia and Polynesia are provided with canoes of such an enormous size that they undertake therewith long and perilous voyages on the high seas! On the other hand, we read of an incestuous Aleutian who, in the company of his daughter, after "pushing off in a baidarka from

¹ S. Muller, "Voyages from Asia to America, p. XXIX.

² *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 201.

³ Hooper, "The Tents of the Tuski", p. 168; London, 1853.

⁴ *Compte-rendu Cong. internat. Américanistes*, Vol. II, p. 328; Luxembourg, 1878.