

will proceed to see whether this mere possibility cannot be converted into a probability, or even some kind of moral certainty.

III.

In the light of present geographical conditions, it seems almost idle to try to prove the possibility of migrations from Asia to America. Without going as far back as the time when geologists contend that both continents were united, we see that they are to-day separated only by the very slightest obstacle to intercourse, namely a sheet of water barely thirty-five miles in width, which sometimes freezes over, so that even white men are known to have crossed it on foot.

We are furthermore aware that this narrow strait is dotted with islands, which would become as many stepping-stones to him who would recoil from the task of covering such a short distance in a single effort.

Nay, not only is the crossing of this strait possible, even for small craft,¹ but we know that it is commonly effected by both Asiatics and native Americans. "The Tchuktchis . . . cross from the coast of Siberia by the narrow part of Bering Straits and generally meet the Kareaks and Malemutes in Port Clarence", writes the traveller Fr. Whymper, who adds that "intertribal commerce goes on to such an extent that clothing, worn hundreds of miles up the Yukon . . . is of Tchuktchi origin".²

According to J. Bush "beaver are procured from the Tchuctchus, who in turn get them from the natives on the east side of Behring's Strait".³

Though emanating from an explorer who, like Whymper, was on the spot, this statement is but an unconscious echo of that of Wrangell, according to whom "le passage est si aisé de cette partie du rivage asiatique sur le continent américain que les Tchouktchis franchissent chaque année le détroit pour aller chercher en Amérique les pelleteries qu'ils viennent vendre dans les villages de Sibérie".⁴

These are the words of a navigator who observed these conditions close on one hundred years ago.

An eye-witness of a later day, Frederick Schwatka, likewise testifies to commercial intercourse between the Asiatic and American tribes.⁵ So does an earlier author, P. Dobell.⁶

¹ Sir George Simpson, "An Overland Journey round the World", Vol. II, pp. 201-202; London, 1847.

² "Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska", p. 138; London, 1868.

³ "Reindeer, Dogs and Snow-Shoes", p. 308; New York, 1871.

⁴ Voyages, vol. I, p. 249.

⁵ "Along Alaska's Great River", p. 323; Saint Louis, 1893.

⁶ "Travels in Kamtschatka and Siberia", Vol. I, p. 144; London, 1830.