

the burning sun of the tropics and the icy atmosphere of the north. He wanders indifferently over the sands of the desert, the waste of polar snows, and the pathless ocean. Neither mountains nor seas intimidate him, and, by the aid of mechanical contrivances, he accomplishes journeys which birds of boldest wing would perish in attempting. Without ascending to the high northern latitudes, where the continents of Asia and America approach within fifty miles of each other, it would be easy for the inhabitant of eastern Tartary or Japan to steer his canoe from islet to islet, quite across to the American shore, without ever being on the ocean more than two days at a time. The communication is somewhat more difficult on the Atlantic side. But even there, Iceland was occupied by colonies of Europeans many hundred years before the discovery by Columbus; and the transit from Iceland to America is comparatively easy. Independently of these channels, others were opened in the southern hemisphere, by means of the numerous islands in the Pacific. The population of America is not nearly so difficult a problem as that of these little spots. But experience shows how practicable the communication may have been, even with such sequestered places. The savage has been picked up in his canoe after drifting hundreds of leagues on the open ocean, and sustaining life for months, by the rain from heaven, and such fish as he could catch. The instances are not very rare; and it would be strange if these wandering barks should not sometimes have been intercepted by the great continent, which stretches across the globe, in unbroken continuity, almost from pole to pole. No doubt history could reveal to us more than one example of men, who, thus driven upon the American shores, have mingled their blood with that of the primitive races who occupied them.

The real difficulty is not, as with the inferior animals, to explain how man could have reached America, but from what quarter he has actually reached it. In surveying the whole extent of the New World, it was found to contain two great families, one in the lowest stage of civilisation, composed of hunters, and another nearly as far advanced in refinement as the semi-civilised empires of Asia. The more polished races were probably unacquainted with the existence of each other, on the different continents of America, and had as little intercourse with the barbarian tribes by whom they were surrounded. Yet they had some things in common both with these last and with one another, which remarkably distinguished them from the inhabitants of the Old World. They had a common complexion and physical organisation,—at least, bearing a more uniform character than is found among the nations of any other quarter of the globe. They had some usages and institutions in common, and spoke languages of similar construction, curiously distinguished from those in the eastern hemisphere.

Whence did the refinement of these more polished races come? Was it only a higher development of the same Indian character, which we see, in the more northern latitudes, defying every attempt at permanent civilisation? Was it engrafted on a race of higher order in the scale originally, but self-instructed, working its way upward by its own powers? Was it, in short, an indigenous civilisation? or was it borrowed in some degree from the nations in the Eastern World? If indigenous, how are we to explain the singular coincidence with the East in institutions and opinions? If Oriental, how shall we account