

1536. bladed paddle, five or six feet long, which serves at once as oar, rudder, and balance or counterpoise. The pygmies of Copenhagen greatly diverted the Spanish ambassador. They crossed each other's course, and performed all the other evolutions with so much address, that they always remained at the same distance from each other, and they passed so rapidly as to dazzle one. They then ran a race with a light boat, pulled by sixteen good rowers, and in a moment left it far behind. The Esquimaux, who use the same kind of boats, have also a larger kind, nearly of the form of our decked sloops; the frame is of wood, but covered, like the others, with skins; they will carry as many as a hundred and fifty persons, and go equally well with sails and oars.

But to close this digression, which is not, however, foreign to my subject, these pygmies of North America seem to me to be of the same race as the Laps and the Samoyedes, and prove quite satisfactorily, it seems to me, an easy passage from Europe to America by Greenland. As for the monstrous men described by the slave of Mr. de Courtemanche and by Donnacona, and the headless men, killed it is pretended by an Iroquois hunter, a few years since, while hunting, it is easy to believe that there is some exaggeration, but it is easier to deny extraordinary facts than to explain them; and, moreover, are we at liberty to reject whatever we cannot explain? Who can pretend to know all the caprices and mysteries of nature? We know how the imagination of a mother affects her unborn offspring. Experience, the very testimony of Scripture, are an indisputable proof. Add to this the strange figures, regarded by some nations as a beauty, and so jealously adhered to, that they put the bodies of their children to torture to complete what the mother's imagination could not effect; and we can easily conceive that there can be men different enough from the generality, to allow some people who catch at an object quickly without taking time to examine, to relate absurd stories, not, however, without some reality.