

much progress in the art of ship-building and navigation for the last three thousand years. Then, there is, besides the Pacific Gulf Stream, a broad ocean current in the north temperate zone, setting from the shores of China almost across to our north-west coast, with the prevailing winds in the same direction. When we consider the amount of coasting trade that for ages must have been carried on along the eastern shores of Asia, the populous condition of those countries and the inducements to search out the neighboring isles in quest of subsistence or shelter from enemies, it would seem to have been the greatest of miracles if vessels, with their freight of human beings, had not, in numerous instances, in the course of two or three thousand years, been driven off to sea, by storms, and disabled for making their way back, and falling into the westerly winds and currents, been wafted to the north-west coast of America; and deeply involved in mystery as we regard the origin of the Indians, had the Europeans found the country destitute of inhabitants, it would have been a still greater mystery.

Lieut. Maury, Director of the American Nautical Observatory, in a letter to Mr. Schoolcraft, published in his "National and Tribal History," says, there are well attested instances of Japanese vessels being found in a disabled condition near our north-west coast. He says further, "When we take into consideration the position of North America with regard to Asia, and New Holland in regard to Africa, with the winds and currents of the ocean, it would have been more remarkable that America should not have been peopled from Asia, or New Holland from Africa than that they should have been."* To my mind, such an event was the inevitable consequence of the relative positions and condition of Asia and America, and the winds and currents of the Pacific.

But the chances for accidental arrivals from Asia would be confined, almost exclusively, to the north-west coast. According to Lieut. Maury, a disabled vessel would never drift from

* He proceeds to show how naturally and unavoidably the latter must have taken place by chance voyages.