

In pottery the Indian displayed inventive genius and practical skill. He moulded, out of clay and sand, vessels useful to him for many purposes. The material was kneaded and wrought with patient and studious care, and moulded by the hand into forms suggested by convenience and taste. Specimens of his pottery are exhumed, even at this day, so well tempered and baked that they have resisted the action of air and frost for more than two hundred years.<sup>4</sup>

These are only a few among the many instances in which the American Indian has not only displayed a capacity for mechanical execution, but a marked power in the line of invention or contrivance.

If, under the most unfavorable circumstances he could devise a boat, of a figure and material eminently adapted to his purpose, of gliding rapidly and safely over the surface of the lake or the river; if he could invent a sail, made of animal substance, which should prove for his purposes a fair substitute for canvas; if he could shape an arrow-head, which by its construction should be peculiarly adapted to carry death to his enemies; if he could add a feature to the same implement that should extend its range and give effectiveness to its purpose; if he could combine clay and sand, and mould them into vessels of excellent quality and lasting service in his rude mode of life, can it be regarded as at all remarkable that he should discover a method of fashioning the native copper, which he picked up on the surface of the earth or drew out of the crevices of the rocks, into the utensils which he needed for daily use, shaping it with the hammer, or even casting it in moulds of the simplest and lowest forms of the art? The application of heat for melting was entirely within his power. The forest furnished abundant material. The native potter would naturally, and almost in the line of his art, furnish the moulds for the castings. Thus the step seems to be but a short one, and by no means above his ordinary achievements, between what we

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<sup>4</sup>For a description of the mode of manufacturing pottery by the Indians, vide *Histoire du Canada*, par Gabriel Sagard Théodat, Paris, ed. 1876, Vol. I, p. 250. Sagard published his history in 1636, and is indisputable authority, not only as to the method but to the fact of its manufacture in his time. His description may be found in English in *Champlain's Voyages*, Prince Society ed., Vol. II., note 170.