

out a considerable portion of Central Africa, the cowrie is still the current coin. In many parts of India, in Siam, and throughout the Burmese empire, it is universally employed as small change, and has a recognised though fluctuating value. About the middle of last century, 2400 cowries were equivalent, in Bengal, to one rupee, but increasing facilities of intercommunication have tended to multiply them and depreciate their worth. The influence of European civilization, under British rule, has in many districts displaced the primitive cowrie, by a copper and a silver currency, while the increasing monetary transactions of the most favored districts lead to the circulation even of the gold mohur, so that now, in Bengal and similar centres of commercial exchange, it requires nearly an additional thousand cowries to make up the value of the silver rupee.

Corresponding to the cowrie currency of Asia and Africa, is the use by the American Indians of the North West, of the iouqua, a shell found on the neighboring shores of the Pacific, and employed by them both for ornament and as money. The Chinooks and other Indians wear long strings of iouqua shells as necklaces and fringes to their robes. These are said to be procured only at Cape Flattery, at the entrance of the Straits of De Fuca, where they are obtained by a process of dredging, and have a value assigned to them increasing in proportion to their size. This varies from about an inch and a half to upwards of two inches in length. They are white, conical, and slightly curved in form, and taper to a point. Their circumference at the widest part does not greatly exceed the stem of a clay tobacco pipe, and they are thin and translucent. Mr. Paul Kane writes to me in reference to them: "A great trade is carried on among all the tribes in the neighborhood of Vancouver's Island, through the medium of these shells. They are valuable in proportion to their length, and their value increases according to a fixed ratio, forty shells being the standard number required to extend a fathom's length. A fathom thus tested is equal in value to a beaver's skin, but if shells can be found so far in excess of the ordinary standard that thirty-nine are long enough to make the fathom, it is worth two beavers' skins, if thirty-eight, three beavers' skins, and so on: increasing in value one beaver skin for every shell less than the standard number."

No evidence has yet appeared to indicate the use of the marine or fresh water shells of Europe as a species of currency during the era