

comparatively recent. Were the old pipes heirlooms—family fetishes perhaps,—were they only “finds” to some succeeding Indian, as they are to ourselves, or, were some of those we look upon as ancient pipes after all simply reproductions of old patterns? Who shall say? If we may form our conclusions from the writings of travelers, and from what we know to be yet the practice among outlying tribes, the ceremonial pipe was distinguished from others both in point of size and grandeur, but even this is a little hazy, and we are to a great extent in ignorance of the whole part played by the pipe among pre-historic Indians.

It has long been found convenient by writers and students to refer all Indian “goods and chattels” of unknown use to the catalogue of “ceremonial” objects. The list has become a very large one, and is likely to increase, although there can be little doubt that if our knowledge were as extensive as our possessions the number of ceremonial articles would be very materially reduced. A considerable proportion of these relics are made of Huronian slate, which is often found so beautifully veined, or grained, as to be highly suggestive of petrified wood to a common observer. The objects made of this material are among the most beautiful specimens of primitive handicraft found in North America, and easily rank first among the Indian relics of Ontario. To whatever use assigned, they must always have possessed a high value, and one would naturally suppose that they must have been conspicuous objects on the person, or connected with the persons of their owners. If worn as charms or amulets, they would have been very noticeable—if employed in dances, feasts or pow-wows they could scarcely have failed to attract the attention of onlookers, and yet amid all that has appeared respecting “The Manners and Customs of the North American Indians,” we search in vain for information with regard to those so-called “ceremonial” objects of stone. We find tolerably minute descriptions of head-dresses, masks, mantles, robes, leggins, moccasins, wampum belts, necklaces of various kinds, bracelets, ornaments of feathers and porcupine quills, dyes and pigments, but not a word about “ceremonial” stones—some of which were conventionalised forms of quadrupeds and birds, some elegantly formed bars (in all these cases having a hole bored diagonally through the base at each end), some like double-edged axes, some resembling pairs of horns, some like butterflies, and others of various fanciful shapes, but always with a hole apparently for the reception of a handle, or perhaps for suspension. Regarding these not a syllable has been written to satisfy our curiosity.

It is particularly noteworthy that specimens of the kind in question are nearly always found absolutely perfect, free from marks of abrasion or wear, and not even a sign of friction about the holes.

Some students wonder very pertinently whether these objects had not actually gone out of use previous to the appearance of the white man, and here again we are confronted with the possibility of another occupation by a people previous to that of the tribes found in possession by the French.

With regard to surmises of this kind, there is presumably no desire to point to dispersed or supplanted races of totally different origin, as is sometimes done when mention is made of the Mound-Builders, but rather to such speedy and overwhelming extirpations of tribe by tribe as have fallen within historic scope.

The art of flint-flaking is still practiced by some of the North-west Indians, but so far as is known nothing corresponding to ceremonial stones has been produced by any aboriginal people during the historic period.