

The people of Api, one of the lowest in the scale of civilization, have peculiar modes of burial. They keep the body until decomposition sets in, when the bones are carefully removed, painted red, and wrapped in bark and buried. A stout post is fixed upright at each corner of the grave, and the sides ornamented with large shells, skulls, and bones of the dugong. In all cases these people tattoo and paint themselves. The present North American paints himself; the ancient inhabitants of Britain, according to Cæsar, dyed themselves with woad, and there is evidence that the reindeer hunter also decorated himself with paint, using the red hæmatite or oxide of manganese for that purpose. A shell full of red hæmatite was found in a cave on the banks of Gardon, and close to the shell a mortar, which had been used to grind the color and mix it with grease.

Now we have evidences shewing that what a man used or valued most during life was buried with him at death. We also know that what a man places the highest value upon he is most likely to take greatest care of, carrying it carefully, and perpetually watching, lest it be lost or injured.

Knowing this savage love of ornament and their habit of burying with the dead his personal effects, let us look at the contents of the various caves and tumuli, and examine the articles found. In these burying grounds we will find many substances, in the shape of ornaments, of such tender a nature as to preclude the idea of their having been deposited by any other agency than by man.

The beauty and great variety of marine shells no doubt were reasons for their being used as articles of personal adornment. They were used for other much more commercial as well as historical purposes among the tribes of North America.

Shells have been used in both the new and the old worlds as currency. The Cowrie shells, which are the most familiar to commercial students, are procured on the coast of Congo, the Philippine and Maldive islands. Of the Maldive group they form the chief article of export. The Philippine islands are in the Southern Pacific, and the Maldives in the Indian Ocean, yet these shells circulate as currency in Southern Asia, and almost into the heart of Africa.

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