

exceedingly hard. The slate carvings, mostly models of *totem* poles, are in no wise attractive from the beauty of the subject, but are striking examples of skill in treatment of material. The Thlinkets proper make odd carvings in bone; imitations of the human face on pipes; weird masks in both bone and wood; elaborate carvings on walrus tusks, which are far from devoid of beauty, while they attract attention by the delicacy of manipulation, though there may be little delicacy in the subject. The horn of the mountain goat affords material for spoons with carved handles which never fail to find a purchaser in the tourist. Silver coins are hammered into bracelets or spoons, which are then chased with a pocket-knife. Basket-work is carried to a high degree of excellence by the women, especially among the northern Thlinkets, the finest being that of the Yakutat. The baskets, made from the cypress root and coloured with home-made dyes, are so pliable that they can be packed flat in a trunk, are very durable, and are so close as to hold water. Yet this last statement does not always hold good, for the tourist trade has become so extensive that baskets of less compact texture are not unknown. But those of the best manufacture are water-tight, and it is said that if heated stones be thrown in, the water can be kept hot long enough to cook ordinary vegetables without injuring the basket in any way. The Chilcat women weave blankets from the hair of the mountain goat, which in closeness of texture rival the more celebrated blankets of the New Mexico Navajos. These are embroidered after the weaving is completed; the colours are brilliant, but are so skilfully arranged that they are not displeasing. As an industrious woman requires about six months to manufacture a blanket, the price—about seventy-five dollars—is by no means exorbitant.

The most ponderous examples of Thlinket carving are the huge *totem* poles, which tell the owner's genealogy. Such poles were seen in front, or alongside, of many dwellings in villages of British Columbia and Prince of Wales Island near which the steamer passed; but in Wrangel, where the steamer first stopped, they are far less numerous, and most of them are decayed, so that they are not likely to weather the storms of many more winters. The Hydahs of Queen Charlotte Island had great numbers of them a few years ago in some villages—"at least two carved posts for each house, and these, when the village is first seen from a distance, give the aspect of a patch of burnt forest with bare bristling tree-stems."¹ The Hydahs excel all the rest in the quantity and artistic character of their carvings; the stone *totems* made by them are simply models or copies of some of the large poles. The Chimsyan Indians, after their conversion to Christianity, cut down their poles. The Wrangel poles are amusing rather than interesting; the most grotesque is that surmounted by a human effigy wearing the ordinary chimney-pot, or stove-pipe, hat. Carved posts were seen in the Indian village near Juneau, but they are certainly rare in Sitka.

These posts have a connection with the totemic or clan system prevailing among the people of this coast. The Yakutat Indians² are said to

¹ G. M. Dawson. *Geol. Surv. of Canada; Rep. of Prog.* 1878-9, p. 116 B.

² Dall, *loc. cit.* p. 37.