

people."<sup>1</sup> He states that there are only two left-handed specimens in the U. S. National Museum. Professor Putnam finds that over thirty examples in the Peabody Museum are so shaped as to be used by the right hand.<sup>2</sup> We cannot be certain as to how many of the *Unios* in the Museum were, if at all, used as spoons, and, consequently, also, whether they had been intended for use with the right or left hand. This is all the more difficult to determine, owing to the fact that none of them has been altered in any way. Both valves of some species could be held equally well, and perhaps used just as conveniently too, with either hand.

#### *Knives.*

Among the many economic uses of shells is that of cutting instruments. The sharp-edged *Unios* and *Anodontas* no doubt were often made to perform this office, for it is reasonable to suppose that if cutting was done with flint or chert knives (often with dull edges) shells could be made to cut just as readily. Indeed, in some of the accounts of the Indians given by early writers, we find allusions to shell knives. Kalm, writing of the Indians of New Jersey, says: "Instead of *knives* they were satisfied with little sharp pieces of flint or quartz, or else some other hard kind of stone, or with a sharp shell, or with a piece of bone which they had sharpened."<sup>3</sup> Henry Hudson, speaking of some Indians he met during his first voyage, and the preparations they made to entertain him, says: "They likewise killed a fat dog and skinned it in great haste with shells which they had got out of the water."<sup>4</sup> The last part of this reads as if the knives had been hastily improvised—in fact, had just been taken from the water for the purpose. Beverly states that before the Virginia Indians were supplied with metallic tools "Their Knives were either Sharpened Reeds or Shells, and their Axes sharp Stones bound to the end of a Stick, and glued in with Turpentine. By the help of these they made their Bows of the Locust tree."<sup>5</sup> The Menomimi Indians used clam-shell knives.<sup>6</sup>

"A number of authors mention the use of shells as scalping knives."<sup>7</sup> And in Bressani's *Relation* (1653), we read of shells being used in torturing a prisoner. "To cut off Guillaume's right forefinger," he says, "a barbarian used, not a knife, but a shell, like a saw; which could not cut the tough and slippery sinews; and therefore he tore it off by sheer force."<sup>8</sup> Strachey asserts that when Powhatan "would punish any notorious enemye or trespasser, he caused him to be tyed to a tree, and with muscle-shells or reedes the executioner cutteth off his joints one after another, ever casting what is cut of into the fier; then doth he proceede with shells and reedes to case the skyn from his head and face."<sup>9</sup>

Another interesting reference to the use of shell knives, which occurs in Brickell's *The Natural History of North Carolina*, may be mentioned.

<sup>1</sup> "Art in Shell," p. 199.

<sup>2</sup> *Eleventh Annual Report Peabody Museum*, p. 295; footnote.

<sup>3</sup> *Travels into North America* (London, 1771), Vol. II., p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> De Laet's "Discovery of the New Netherlands," quoting Hudson's narrative; *Collections of the New York Historical Society* (Second Series, 1841), Vol. I., p. 300.

<sup>5</sup> *History of Virginia*, Book III., p. 60.

<sup>6</sup> Hoffman, *opp. cit.*, p. 257.

<sup>7</sup> Holmes: "Art in Shell."

<sup>8</sup> Burrows' Edition, Vol. 37, p. 195. Father Isaac Joques in the *Relation* of 1647, also says: "They, [the Iroquois] used a scallop or an oyster-shell for cutting off the right thumb of the other Frenchman, to cause him more pain." (Vol. 31, p. 45.)

<sup>9</sup> *The Historie of Travaile into Virginia Britannia*, etc. (Hakluyt Society, London 1849). P. 52.