

A level place having been selected, a bed of clay somewhat larger than the canoe is prepared.* Into this a number of stout stakes are driven solidly and perpendicularly in two lines corresponding with the intended form of the canoe, and about six inches higher than it is to be. For a two-fathom boat the number would be six on each side, not counting those at the ends, where two are driven in side by side, with only sufficient space between them to admit of a double thickness of bark.

The bark having been previously procured in the largest possible sheets free from flaws, and having been kept for some time under pressure to take the curve out of it, is now placed between the stakes, inside out, or so that the natural bend will be reversed. In a canoe twelve feet long, or, to use the locally popular phraseology, in a "two fathom canoe," the number of sheets of bark may vary from four to six—the fewer the better. The overlapping edges that form the joints of the sheets are firmly stitched with thongs made from the fibrous roots of the spruce, and the joint is made water-tight by a liberal but neat application of pine pitch. Of course, this part of the work is done previous to placing the bark in position on the stakes. Firmly held together at the ends, the united pieces of bark now form a hollow into which water is poured. The water is brought to a high degree of heat by means of stones which are placed in it after being made hot in a fire close by. The effect of the steaming is to curve the bark to the required form—that is, as flat as possible at the bottom, and with sides rising almost straight. Ribs from one to two inches wide, and one-fourth inch thick of pliable material are next fixed in position not more than an inch apart, and these, again, are held in place by means of strips running lengthwise. The strips forming the gunwale are lashed firmly by means of spruce root. A light but stout bar across the middle, and a shorter one near each end add materially to the stiffness of the canoe. Timid passengers must sit in the bottom, but the expert paddler, white man or Indian, perches himself on a level with the thwarts, seemingly as secure as if in the jolly-boat of a man-o'-war.

In the production of canoes for sale, the modern Indian does not fail to avail himself of nails, though he still possesses the art of completing his tiny vessel if necessary, in true old-fashioned style. None in this locality but the two Indians mentioned attempt canoe-building, and Ag-wah-setch's son informed us he did not care to know how. In other places it is the same. Indifference on the part of the young men, increasing scarcity of bark, and the introduction of cedar boats will soon render the making of this elegant, light, substantial, serviceable, and peculiar craft a thing of the past.

Besides the result of surface finds along the shores, I procured from Ag-wah-setch a few stone relics he had picked up, and a very fine old specimen of porcupine quill work, the production of which is also rapidly dying out. Although Ag-wah-setch hails directly from Oka, he stated that the specimen in question (see colored plate) was once the property of his grandfather who resided near the Georgian Bay.

It is figured full size on the plate. Its use I was unable to learn, but in all probability it was worn in front, suspended from either the neck or the waist, bearing, as it does, a symbol—for the black, T-like design is certainly meant to represent a bird, and that bird, very likely, an eagle. The arrangement of colours is pleasing, and the pattern, though somewhat intricate, is almost perfectly

* It need scarcely be said that in some places this preparation would not be necessary to the same extent, but Ag-wah-setch had brought his clay from some distance to enable him to carry on his work near home.

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Mr. W.
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