

sound be perceived, the issue of the expedition would be considered doubtful.* This shell, it cannot be doubted, was of marine origin, though the fact is not stated in the text. The nearest sea-coast from which it could have been obtained is that of the Mexican Gulf, distant about nine hundred miles from the district inhabited by the Omahas.

The white traders used to derive great profit by selling fine sea-shells to the tribes of the interior. Kohl, for instance, learned from Canadian fur-traders that the Ojibways, on Lake Superior, formerly purchased sea-shells from them at considerable prices. "When they (the traders) exhibited a fine large shell, and held it to the ears of the Indians, these latter were astonished, saying they heard the roaring of the ocean in it, and paid for such a marvelous shell furs to the value of thirty or forty dollars, and even more."†

Having undertaken to compose this essay for the purpose of bringing together a series of facts relating to the trade among the aborigines of North America, I would be guilty of an omission, if I neglected to mention the wampum-beads, which, besides other uses, represented the money among them. The term "wampum" is often applied to shell-beads in general, but should be confined, I think, to a certain class of cylindrical beads, usually one-fourth of an inch long and drilled lengthwise, which were chiefly manufactured from the shells of the common hard-shell clam (*Venus mercenaria*, Lin). This bivalve occurring, as every one knows, in great abundance on the North American coasts, formed an important article of food of the Indians living near the sea, a fact demonstrated by the enormous quantity of castaway clam-shells, which form a considerable part of North American *Kjoekkenmoeddings*. The natives used to string the mollusks and to dry them for consumption during winter. The blue or violet portions of the clam-shells furnished the material for the dark wampum, which was held in much higher estimation than that made of the white part of the shells, or of the spines of certain univales. Even at the present time places are pointed out on the Atlantic sea-board, for example on that of Long Island, where the Indians manufactured wampum, and such localities may be recognized by the accumulations of clam-shells from which the blue portions are broken off.

Wampum-beads formed a favorite material for the manufacture of necklaces, bracelets, and other articles of ornament, and they constituted the strings and belts of wampum, which played such a conspicuous part in Indian history.

Loskiel makes the following statement in reference to wampum: "Before North America was discovered by the Europeans, the Indians mostly made their strings and belts of small pieces of wood, cut to an equal size and dyed white and black. They made some of shells, which

* Long, Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains, performed in the years 1819 and 1820, London, 1823, Vol. II, p. 47, &c.

† Kohl, Kitschi-Gami, Vol. I, p. 186.