

To the absence of all knowledge of the metallurgic arts among primitive nomade tribes, or to the want of the metals themselves, as among the natives of the Australasian Archipelago, may be ascribed many of the economic uses to which sea shells have been so widely applied. They illustrate in a striking manner the adaptability of man to the most varied physical conditions of the globe, and frequently exhibit the imperfectly developed reasoning faculties of the savage, working within narrow limits, akin to the instincts of the lower animals. Thus we find curious accidental affinities between the rude primitive arts of the European savage in the dim dawn of the ancient world's prehistoric centuries, the equally rude arts of the Carib or the Guanche of the Antilles when brought to the knowledge of the old world in the fifteenth century, and the simple devices of the Polynesians occupying the Volcanic, or Coral Islands of the Southern Ocean, first visited by Europeans in the eighteenth century. Owing to the absence, on many of the islands of the Australian Archipelago, not only of metals, but even of stone and wood, marine shells form the most important available material alike for economic utility and ornament; and the same appears to have been the case, to a great extent, among the Indians of the Antilles in ante-Columbian centuries. The extreme beauty of many of the marine productions of the tropics and the Southern Ocean, sufficiently accounts for their adoption for personal adornment, as in the case of the *Cypræa aurantia*, or beautiful orange cowry, of which specimens are rarely to be met with undrilled, owing to its use as a favorite ornament of the natives of the Friendly Islands. But these spoils of the ocean acquire an additional value, when, as in Central Africa, or among the American Indians around the head waters of the Mississippi, they have all the added virtues which rarity confers. Dr. Livingston, when leaving the Belondas after a brief sojourn among them, thus records his friendly parting with their chief: "As the last proof of friendship, Shinte came into my tent, though it could scarcely contain more than one person, looked at all the curiosities, the quicksilver, the looking-glass, books, hair brushes, comb, watch, &c., &c., with the greatest interest; then closing the tent, so that none of his people might see the extravagance of which he was about to be guilty, he drew out from his clothing a string of beads, and the end of a conical shell, which is considered, in regions far from the sea, of as great value as the Lord Mayor's badge is in London. He hung it round my neck, and said,