

occasions as the sacred vessels from which they administer medicine to the sick; but it is in one of these *sinistrorsal turbinella* that the consecrated oil is kept, with which the emperor is anointed at his coronation.

It is probably in reference to this custom that Meuschen, who considered what is now recognised as the full-grown shell a different variety from the smaller one—called by him the *Murex Pyrum*—gave to it the name of *Murex Sacrificator*.\*

These shells are often curiously ornamented with elaborate carvings, fine specimens of which are preserved in the British Museum. In the Synopsis of the Zoological Galleries in that Museum, it is remarked, "The *Turbinella* from their form have been called turnip shells. These are often used as oil vessels in the Indian temples, and for this purpose are carved and otherwise ornamented, as may be seen by some in the collection. When reversed, they are much sought for by the Ceylonese, and highly valued; one of these reversed shells is in this collection. They are said to sell for a very large price in Ceylon and China."

In the great basin of Lake Superior, and in the higher latitudes beyond—the regions occupied by the Algonquin Indians—the traces of older occupation are, with one exception, few and slight. Dr. Schoolcraft remarks of this region:—"There are no artificial mounds, embankments, or barrows, to denote that the country had been anciently inhabited. . . . It is something to affirm that the mound-builders, whose works have filled the West with wonder, had never extended their sway here. The country appears never to have been fought for, in ancient times, by a semi-civilized, or even pseudo-barbaric race. There are but few darts or spear heads. I have not traced remains of the incipient art of pottery, known to the Algonquin and other American stocks, beyond the Straits of Saint Mary, which connect Lakes Huron and Superior; and am inclined to believe that they do not extend in that longitude beyond the latitude of 36° 30'. There is a fresh magnificence in the ample area of Lake Superior, which appears to gainsay the former existence, and exercise by man, of any laws of mechanical or industrial power, beyond the canoe-frame and the war-club. And its storm-beaten and castellated rocks, however, imposing, give no proofs that the dust of human antiquity, in its artificial phases, has ever rested on them."

It is in this region that the great mineral treasures are found which attracted the attention of the native Indians long before the discovery of this continent by Columbus or Cabot, and in that prehistoric period of America furnished the chief element of traffic, and the consequent source of intercourse between the north and south. I have referred in a former communication\* to the working of the copper by the Indians of Lake Superior, without any skill in the metallurgic arts, and indeed without any precise distinction between the copper which they mechanically separated from its native matrix, and the unmanageable stone or flint out of which they were ordinarily accustomed to fashion their spear and arrow heads. This metal, Dr. Schoolcraft remarks, "was employed by the Indians in making various ornaments, implements, and instruments. It was used by them for arm and wrist-bands, pyramidal tubes, or dress ornaments, chisels and axes; in all cases, however, having been wrought out exclusively by mere hammering, and brought to its required shapes without the use of the crucible or the art of

soldering. Such is the state of the manufactured article, as found in the gigantic grave creek mound, and in the smaller mounds of the Scioto Valley, and wherever it has been scattered, in early days, through the medium of the ancient Indian exchanges. In every view which has been taken of the subject, the area of the basin of Lake Superior must be regarded as the chief point of this intermediate traffic in native copper. In exchange for it, and for the brown pipe-stone of the Chippewa River of the Upper Mississippi, and the blood-red pipe-stone of the Coteau des Prairies west of the St. Peters, they received certain admired species of sea-shells of the Floridian Coasts and West Indies, as well as some of the more elaborately and well-sculptured pipes of compact carbonate of lime, grauwaacke, clay slate, and serpentines, of which admirable specimens, in large quantities, have been found by researches made in the sacrificial mounds of the Ohio Valley, and in the ossuaries of the Lakes. The makers of these may also be supposed to have spread more northwardly the various ornamented and artistic burnt-clay pipes of ancient forms and ornaments, and the ovate and circular beads, heart-shaped pendants and ornamented gorgets, made from the conch, which have received the false name of ivory, or fine bone and horn. The direction of this native exchange of articles appears to have taken a strong current down the line of the great lakes, through Lake Erie and Ontario, along the shores of the States of Ohio and New York, and into the Canadas. Specimens of the blood-red pipe-stone, wrought as a neck ornament, and of the conch bead pendants and gorgets, &c., occur in the ancient Indian burial grounds, as far east as Onondaga and Oswego, in New York, and in the high country about Beverly, and the sources of the several small streams which pour their waters into Burlington Bay, on the north shores of Lake Ontario."

In view of this ancient traffic between the north and south, the conchological relics now referred to are of peculiar value. Whatever doubt may be thrown on the derivation of the specimens of ancient native manufacture, or of the copper found in sepulchral and other deposits in the Southern States, and in Central America, no question can be made as to the tropical and marine origin of the large shells now exhibited, and brought from the inland districts, lying between the Ontario and Huron Lakes, or the still remoter shores and islands of Georgian Bay, at a distance of not less than two thousand miles from the shores of Yucatan, on the main land, where the *pyrula perversa* is found in its native locality.

It is obvious from the large and cumbersome size of the American *pyrula*, that they must have possessed some very peculiar value or sacredness in the estimation of the Indian tribes of the northern regions, to encourage their transport from so great a distance, through regions beset by so many impediments to direct traffic. Their transport to the Canadian Lake regions appears to have been practised from a very remote period. Dr. Schoolcraft describes specimens of the *pyrula perversa* obtained by him in these regions in an entire state, among traces of Indian arts and customs, "deemed to be relics of the Ante-Cabotian period;" and from the circumstance of their discovery in sepulchral mounds, and laid at the head of the buried chief, with his copper kettle and other peculiarly prized relics, the *pyrula* of this continent would appear to have been held in no less veneration by the natives of America, than the Asiatic species now are by the native Cingalese, or the more civilized and cultivated priests of China. The examples found are generally more or less marked or ornamented. The

\* Dillwyn's Descriptive Catalogue of Recent Shells, p. 569.

\* Canadian Journal, vol. ii., p. 214

\* History, &c., of Indian Tribes," vol. i., p. 67, 68.