

lately, the original pieces having been lost. Since they have had opportunity of obtaining silver from the whites, all bracelets, bangles and such like ornaments are made of that metal. Copper is now considered too base a metal for such use, although anciently it was esteemed of high value, next to iron.

Ancient "Coppers" (Haida Taow). [Nos. 1337, 1338.]—These are the only two antique coppers known among the people of Masset, and were made before the natives procured sheet copper from the Russians in Alaska. They have been in the possession of the same family through a long line of chiefs who displayed them on festal occasions. A chief named Edensaw, now long deceased¹, used to wear them bound one to each side of his head-dress (*tsilk*) on occasions of ceremonial dances, etc.

These coppers were formerly of great value among the coast tribes, ten slaves or one thousand blankets being sometimes bartered for one. They were regarded with peculiar veneration, and a chief who could afford to purchase one of these costly articles and cut it in pieces at a feast of property-distribution was highly honoured. The pieces were given away to the principal chiefs who were guests, and were most highly valued by them. Sometimes such a copper was nailed to the carved heraldic column or pole which was erected at the feast, and it then served as a permanent ostentatious mark of the owner's extravagance. Sometimes they were attached to mortuary receptacles in honour of the departed.

The size of these coppers varied from seven or eight inches to four feet long. The original coppers were brought from the northern portion of Alaska, and the tradition runs that they were first made out of lumps of native copper which were found in the bed of a river there, but latterly the Indians bought sheet copper from the Russians at Sitka, and also in Victoria, and several natives along the coast commenced manufacturing spurious coppers from this material, which ultimately produced a fall in the value of coppers, and by glutting the market destroyed the romance of the idea that the copper was one of earth's rarest and choicest treasures, fit only to be purchased by great chiefs who desired to squander away their property for the sake of gratifying their self esteem. The customs appertaining to such coppers were not peculiar to the Haida, but were practiced by all the tribes of the Northwest Coast.

These coppers were not polished, but blackened by a very peculiar process (long kept a secret by the makers) which produced a permanent dull black, on which heraldic devices were scratched or engraved. This blackening effectually prevented corrosion.

Each of the genuine old coppers had an individual name such as:—

Taow-ked-oos—"The copper that steals all the people."

Yen-an-taous—"The copper that is like a cloud."

Taow-kee-ass—"The copper that stands perpendicular."

Len-ah-taous—"The copper that must needs be fathomed."²

These names served to perpetuate the identity of the copper when it changed hands, and were used in referring to it in the traditions of the people.

The name of a copper in Haida is *Taow*, Sitka *Tinnah*, Tshimsean *Hy-y-etsk*.

¹ Edensaw, is a name successively assumed by each chief of a certain district, by virtue of his office.

² Referring to its large size.