

value was a buffalo-horse, *i. e.*, a horse swift enough to outrun a young adult buffalo in the fall.

It appears probable that they once carried on a trade indirectly with the tribes of the Pacific coast, for they had *Dentalium* shells similar to those obtained on the Pacific, and they prized them so highly that the white traders found it advisable to obtain them for the trade. As late as 1866, ten of these shells, of inferior size, costing the traders only a cent apiece, would buy a superior buffalo robe, and formerly only two or three of the same quality were paid for a robe. Modern traders, with whom the writer has conversed, obtain their shells from eastern importers, and know nothing of the original source of supply. They suppose them to come from the Atlantic coast or the Great Lakes, and call them "Iroquois shells", which is probably their corruption of the Chinook "hyakwa"; but it is possible the reverse is the case.

They also used, and still use, as ornaments, fragments of the *Abalone* shells (one or more species of *Haliotis*) of the Pacific. These are now supplied to the trade under the name of California shells. Ten years ago, one of these shells, unpolished, sold for a good robe. There is little doubt that they used *Abalone*, *Dentalium*, and other sea-shells before the traders brought them. Old traders and old Indians say so. Even as late as 1833, it would seem that they had not yet become a regular part of a trader's outfit; for Maximilian says of the Mandans:—"They do not disfigure the bodies; only they make some apertures in the outer rim of the ear, in which they hang strings of beads, brass, or iron rings of different sizes, or shells, the last of which they obtain from other Indian tribes. If they are questioned respecting these shells, they answer that they were brought from the sea."*

§ 17. INTERCOURSE WITH WHITES.—In a recent little work entitled *O-kee-pa*, George Catlin says:—"Two exploring parties had long before visited the Mandans, but without in any way affecting their manners. The first of these, in 1738, under the lead of the brothers Verendrye, Frenchmen, who afterward ascended the Missouri and Saskatchewan to the Rocky Mount-

* p. 337. See also p. 338, "White dentalium shells."