

Both men and women were tattooed, the devices on their totem poles being depicted on their bodies. The pigment used was made from powdered charcoal derived from alder wood, and it was remarkably permanent. The operation was naturally painful, but it was considered a great disgrace for the patient to flinch or cry out, and if so he was branded as a coward, unworthy of his clan group whose crest he had been tattooed with. Men were tattooed on the thighs, calves of the legs, arms, breast and buttocks. Women were tattooed on arms and legs, but rarely on the breast.

Nowadays, in most villages, a native silversmith will be found who makes bracelets, rings and other ornaments from silver dollars, and these fulfil the feminine craving for adornment, but are poor substitutes for the interesting native art which has now vanished.

#### *Ceremonial Masks*

A vast amount of research has been carried out among the primitive races of the earth as well as through the literature of more civilized people in connection with ceremonial intended to propitiate the spirits of the dead, but the subject is too great to do otherwise than give it a mere reference.

The origins of the mythology of any particular tribe are not easy to fathom, but as Webster says, the fact remains that the dramatization of their ancient legends constituted to the people of North West America a religion quite as powerful and impressive as that of the Christian religion to the average civilized person.

As in many other parts of the world masks and other paraphernalia were used to intensify effect and to inspire awe; the Haidas also exercised great ingenuity on the masks and at their sacred ceremonies. A collection of

these obtained by the author for Professor Tylor can be seen at Oxford.

The *Ni-kils-tlas* mask was the most important, inasmuch as it represented that important creature, the raven, the mythological beliefs regarding which have already been described. The mask depicted the raven's head with an Indian standing on top and a human face in miniature in the centre of the forehead. The symbolism it was intended to convey being the raven as the creator or perhaps the original ancestor of man and the raven's male slave. Another mask of this class represents the raven with a human head and strings attached by which the lips could be opened at will, doubtless when oracular statements were made by the wearer.

The *Lthwō-gī-gē* or *Stlē-whul* mask was adorned with swan's feathers and was used in what is often termed the ghost dance. It was supposed to represent an evil mythological monster which swooped down and carried off young people who then became like their captor.

The ceremonial at which this was used took place in a dark hut and its big red eyes were made visible by a torch held in front of each. Strings were manipulated so as to impart a movement to the mask, and a low chant went on the while.

Another mask was that of a raven's head with an attachment of marten skin; it was used by the Shaman of the village upon the occasion of the ceremonial dance organized by the raven clan; this mask was at least one hundred and sixty years old.

Perhaps little less notable was the frog's head mask, which was an important "property" in the dances of the frog clan. The lower jaw of this was operated by the wearer, and a grating sound was produced which was believed to be like the croaking of a frog. The wearer of the mask would carry in his hand the carved

figure of a frog squatting on a bear's head, and this formed the handle of a dagger which was made of a piece of steel plundered long ages ago from a trading vessel. Its significance was to the effect that the man belonged to the frog totem and his wife to that of the bear.

To another class of ceremonial belongs the salmon dance which took place when these fish were scarce. A chief would be selected for the leading part, and he would wear a mask with two red spots on the forehead, three black marks on the left cheek and black and red dots on the right. In his hand he carried a carved representation of a salmon. Accompanied by the Shaman he would proceed to the beach followed by the people; he would then dance and sing, and then the Shaman would invoke the water spirits and beg them to bring back the salmon.

Another mask represented the most powerful Shaman whose memory tradition preserved. It was small and so was not worn on the face but on the breast of Shamans of later days, for it was believed that the spirit of their distinguished ancestor would guide them aright.

Even women on occasions wore masks, but they were only assumed by those who aspired to magic power. Such a one, when impelled to prophecy, painted her face blue and black and donned her mask which represented, in an exaggerated fashion, the facial contortions such a woman would exhibit when temporarily possessed.

Another mask was said to represent the face of a deceased person of a distant tribe. It was painted grey, and gave the impression of the grimness of death. The natives alleged that it was little used, for but few had the hardihood to perform the dreaded death dance.