

Totem Pole as a New Element in Civilization

The transporting of two totem poles from their places in a deserted Indian village in southern Alaska by the Harriman party on its princely cruise to the Alaskan, Unalaskan, Siberian and Arctic coasts, and afterwards placing the poles in eastern museums as curios; also the securing of a totem pole by a party of excursionists that sailed via the inland route along the Alaskan shore as far as Sitka, and the subsequent acceptance of the pole by the city of Seattle, as a monument in Pioneer square in the heart of the city, has installed the totem pole as a new element in civilization. A general interest as to the appearance, history and possible meaning of these unique objects may be conceded.

The Seattle totem pole is fifty-three feet high and is four feet in diameter at its base. One side of the pole is carved in grotesque

escape. The old Indian watched his children and studied their characteristics, and when he discovered traits in his child common to animals of a certain kind he at once decided as to the identity of his totem. The boy of hugging propensities became his "little bear," and at maturity he was the man of the bear totem. It is to be regretted that the Indian's knowledge of animals was so limited, but he evidently made allowance for that in bending conditions so as to include frogs, ravens, whales and some others. If a child was allowed to reach maturity without a totem he adopted heroic measures on his own behalf, in retiring to the forest to fast until the totem was revealed. There was no uncertainty as to the result when an Indian went out on the warpath after a totem. It was starvation or the totem. It is an original supposition that the hu-

and over-forgiving in favor of reckless gouging—it has been a deep mystery, veiling a charmed story to some who spread it as a mantle of charity over all their own ideals—it has been a "scarecrow" to the unimaginative, a horrible nightmare to the unsentimental—it has been a graveyard trophy to the superstitious, and to others it has been a matter of study, judgment being suspended. The old Indian carved and grunted just as the Yankee whittles and whistles.

The Indian had more time, fewer ornaments and less opportunity for personal distinction, so he whittled a big stick and set it up before his door. He may have imagined that to look at the pole when he had only dried fish to eat tended to reproduce a sensation as of a time when there were berries and moose meat. He may have looked upon animals of the lower kind with an untrained eye, and what he carved with an untrained hand he may have a modest desire to conceal.

If the Indian descended from a frog or a whale, it is not much for us to honor his consciousness of the fact. If an Indian has had bird-like or bear-like propensities they did not reach to civilization and we have no cause to rejoice.

"Totemism" is correctly understood, we can have totems of our own. We have the trees bigger and better than theirs. We can whittle and we can fast to discover our affinity to the lower kind. A California redwood tree carved in figures of a mastodon, a rhinoceros and a dodo would be a striking totem pole. An immense Washington fir tree developed in a white elephant, with room left for a few Creses and a whole wild west menagerie, would mean something at least of more importance than any Indian totem pole.

To the traveler who seeks the wilds of Alaska the totem poles standing in great numbers about the deserted habitations of the Indians at Tongass islands, Kasam and other deserted villages give a weird distinction akin to grandeur to the melancholy scene.

While the presence of the Indian was not inspiring, his departure was a matter of dignity, and his absence is positively startling.

Strange Fascination.

The totem pole is a strange fascination and a haunting memory. While reason does not warrant it, no one who has seen these uncanny totem poles on their native soil can escape an aggravating desire to solve their mystery.

Reason condemns the art of the maker, fancy denies an ideal, yet the poles themselves rebuke undue ridicule—the wild charm of the mystery fascinates to a spell that is akin to hypnotism.

The Harriman party, of our best and wisest people, fell under this spell. They brought two totem poles back to civilization, not deigning to favor us with a sample of the "salmon-scented" Esquimaux, plenty as they were—they brought no inflated seal-skins, no kyaks, no icebergs, or glaciers, no rooks from the seal rookeries, no Russians from Siberia, and no gold from Nome.

The totems at Wrangel, amid the little stores and shops and sidewalks piled high with miners' outfits, are also quite as impressive, and are granted an exclusive presence. The combined totem population of Wrangel furnishes a most striking contrast to the combined actual population—one is silent mystery which is its own dignity; the other is noisy revelry and greed which is its own undoing.

A totem pole as a public monument compels a record and standing for totem poles or it admits of embarrassment on the part of its patrons.

The Seattle pole is a magnet attracting the gaze of each passerby. Little groups of spectators stand and gaze at the pole for a seemingly interminable length of time. The disenchanted observer can scarcely forbear passing about them with his hands to dissolve the spell and free them from the witchery of the pole. One who passes the pole frequently soon has every figure and every line of each figure clearly defined in memory.

Freaks on Seattle's Totem.

The carving on Seattle's totem pole consists of figures, one above the other, that are either efforts to reproduce the forms of human beings, and of animals, or else they are hideous, cold-blooded productions

A Revelation to the Typewriting Fraternity.



THE WAY TOUCH TYPEWRITING IS TAUGHT AT OTHER SCHOOLS.



THE WAY TOUCH TYPEWRITING IS TAUGHT AT THE OMAHA COMMERCIAL COLLEGE.

The above cuts are suggestive. The young lady is using the Mosher Copy Holder, which gives her position, promotes health and facilitates speed and accuracy. The young man represents a victim of a school of inferior equipments and antediluvian methods. He excites our commiseration. Quick consumption will soon fix him for the undertaker. If he were only attending the Omaha Commercial College, where modern equipments are provided and modern methods used, he would now be on the highway to success. Our copy holder, devised by our teacher, Prof. Mosher, our new typewriters and our charts on Touch Typewriting, gives us superior advantages. The copy holder enables the student to use a typewriter the same as a musician would play a piano.

Our equipments and modern methods insure marvelous results. Surely it will pay you to select a progressive school. It will cost you nothing to visit our school, investigate our methods or obtain our catalogue. We start new classes in both Shorthand and Typewriting Tuesday morning, Jan. 2. Address,

Omaha Commercial College.

Rohrbough Bros., Props., Over Boston Store, 16th and Douglas Streets.

Commercial Stationery and Office Supplies

Webster Star Typewriter Ribbons, Webster Carbon Papers, Typewriter Supplies.

G. J. MOYER, 1001 N. Y. Life Building, OMAHA.

DUNDEE

Exclusive residence district. High, dry, healthy. Good Neighborhood. Water, Gas, Electricity, Uniform Shade. Best of Schools. Street car fare 5c, transfers to all Omaha lines.

Low Taxes No Saloons

FREE! BE UP TO DATE THE LATEST FAD

Stamp your initial in gilt on your stationery, letters, books, etc. In order to introduce our indelible ink and gilt, we are going to give away 5,000 of these Rubber Stamp Initiators. This is just a special introductory offer and will last but a limited time. Send 10c to pay postage and packing and we will send you your initial you desire. Mollie Engraving Co., St. Louis, Mo.

'PHONE 2022
Omaha Messenger Service
307 South 16th St.
Uniform Messengers Furnished. Baggage and Trunks Delivered. Quick Service—Day and Night.
W. P. VAN GORDER, Mgr.

Our Christmas Offer

We will give a genuine water color picture worth \$2.50 with each dozen photos, cabinet or larger. All work guaranteed.

Matzen & Co., Studio 1406 Farnam St.

Visit Our New Art Store.

Bring in your photo and have it enlarged and select your frame—they are the latest designs. Frames made to order from 25c up. We have a large assortment of moulding to select from.

The Metropolitan Art & Frame Co. 1819 Leavenworth St., Omaha, Neb. Agents, write for our terms.



TOTEM MONUMENT RECENTLY ERECTED AT SEATTLE.

figures and the figures are stained red, yellow, green, black and white.

The poles are the property of ancient Alaskan Indians, or of their descendants. Here it may be said that writers on the subject of totems or Indian institutions, or of any other unknown relic or conditions, can write but few facts, hence it becomes his art to disguise his suppositions to make them convincing. The first supposition is that the present Alaskan Indians, the Hydahs, who own the poles, if they happen to be around where the poles stand, are either the progenitors or the descendants of the Aztecs—it is not certain which. There is a mystic something about the poles that grants this gleam of intelligence.

The carving was done by means of a curved chisel point held between two sticks and used as a gouge, by use of shells and by burning. The poles bear marks of these implements over their entire surface.

Grotesque Figures.

Many houses had totems and some had more than one. Each totem pole is unlike every other. Grotesque human faces, with bodies as of a bird, bears, frogs, fishes, and birds are common to the poles, so that it is hardly possible that the figures have a special meaning or that the poles were objects of worship.

It is asserted by one authority that "totemism" is a belief in the affinity of man to the animal creation. The Indian traced his pedigree back to some particular animal and that animal became his totem.

Their method of procedure was reasonable if crowned with an illogical conclusion. The father sat with his family about him upon the ground before a fire of blazing fagots. The smoke meandered about in the darkness to find the hole in the roof by which to

man heads with bodies as of birds originated as a truce to conscience on some of these fasting expeditions—the Indian faked the totem when he really ought to have starved to death.

It is also asserted that the Indian tried to write a history of his family feuds and of his individual triumphs.

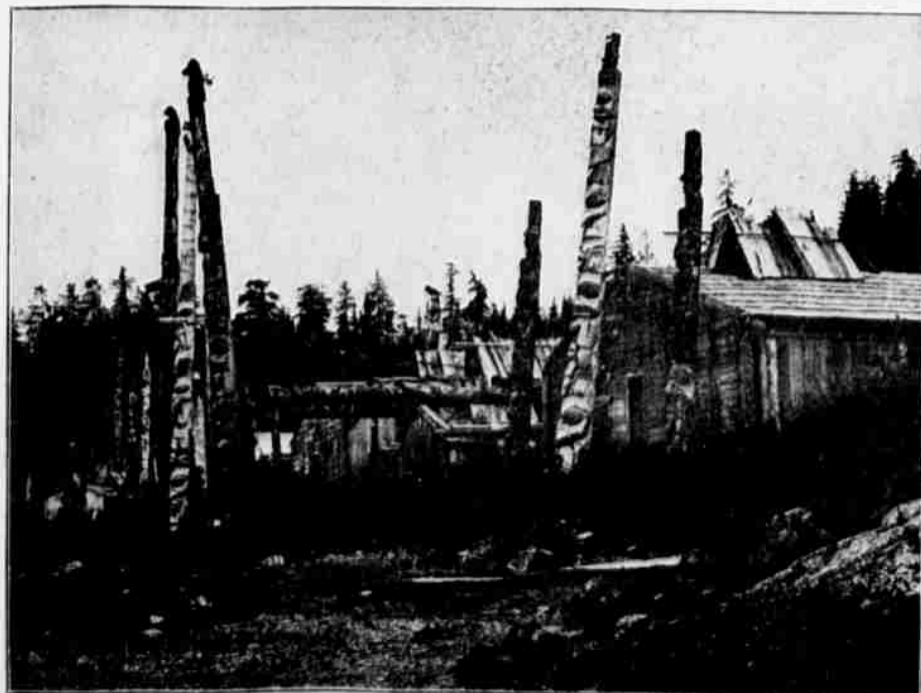
A story is told that an Indian carved a whale on his totem to record the fact that when he was out in the open sea in his canoe a porpoise (weight 250 pounds) became enraged at some offensive condition in his marine environment and jumped out of the water, landing in the canoe. The canoe never wobbled or thought of becoming swamped, and the porpoise was still until the Indian secured a weapon, hit him a killing blow on the head and finished him, hence the Indian recorded himself a brave Indian. Thus was glory a gift of the sea.

The desire of mankind to tell often exceeds his ability to know. Unworthy objects are sometimes rescued from oblivion.

Condemned as Idolatrous.

If the carved pole had a definite object or a story, the zealous student of the sole remaining works of the Hydah Aztecs cannot prove it. Speculation on the subject becomes all the more fascinating as it admits of untold resource and variety of opinion, colored by the mental tendency of the individual.

The pole in question has already been condemned by the Christian women of the Women's Christian Temperance union as the means of rank indulgence in idolatry, on the part of its patrons. They were over-sensitive on religion—it has been a grand and exquisite work of art and a noble monument to some—they were hypnotized by the pole



TOTEM FOREST IN ALASKA.