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THE DECORATIVE ART OF THE INDIANS OF THE NORTH PACIFIC COAST.

It is well known that the native tribes of the North Pacific coast of America ornament their implements with conventionalized representations of animals. The tribes of this region are divided in clans which have animal totems, and it is generally assumed that the carvings represent the totem of the owner of the implement. This view is apparently sustained by the extensive use of the totem as a crest. It is represented on 'totem poles' or heraldic columns, on the fronts of houses, on canoes, on the handles of spoons, and on a variety of objects.

It can be shown, however, that by no means all the carvings made by the natives of this region have this meaning. A collection of data made in a number of museums show that certain objects are preferably ornamented with representations of certain animals, and in many cases an intimate connection exists between the use to which the object is put and its design.

This is very evident in the case of the fish club, which is used for despatching hali-

but and other fish before they are hauled into the canoe. Almost all the clubs that I have seen represent the sea lion or the killer whale, the two sea animals which are most feared by the Indians, and which kill those animals that are to be killed by means of the club. The idea of giving the club the design of the sea lion or killer whale is therefore rather to give it a form appropriate to its function and perhaps secondarily to give it by means of its form great efficiency. This view is corroborated by the following incident which occurs in several tales: A person throws his fish club overboard and it swims away and kills seals and other sea animals, cuts the ice and performs other feats taking the shape of a sea lion or of a killer whale. Here also belongs the belief recorded by Alexander Mackenzie (Trans. Roy. Soc. of Canada, 1891, Sec. II., p. 51): "The Haida firmly believe, if overtaken by night at sea and reduced to sleep in their canoes, that by allowing such a club to float beside the canoe attached to a line it has the property of scaring away whales and other monsters of the deep which might otherwise harm them."