

HIGHLAND RELICS.

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From time to time curious samples of Aboriginal art have turned up in the vicinity of Cold Spring, in the Highlands of the Hudson. Some of these objects are of such a peculiar character as to puzzle those archæologists who have examined them.

The Indian village sites of the Highlands are well known to those interested, and have been explored time and again for such relics as occasionally come to light. The finds consist principally of arrow and spear points of flint or other hard stone, and are of almost every known shape. Such articles are gladly seized upon by the numerous amateur archæologists of the locality, and are highly prized as



FIG. 1.—ONE SIDE LEADEN AMULET.

mementoes of the red men; but now and then unique bits of workmanship have been picked up, and have caused no end of speculation in regard to their origin.

One of these (Figs. 1 and 2) is a lead amulet about one inch and a half in diameter, and about one-eighth of an inch thick. This little ornament has a wreath-like border on both sides, within which are curious figures composed of straight lines. The characters, if such they be, are supposed to have some significance; but what? No one has as yet been able to guess. The amulet was found upon the surface of the ground in a field known as "Indian Field," situated about two miles south of Cold Spring, and directly opposite West Point. Mr. James Nelson, the finder, believes the object to be of Indian origin, but is of opinion that the natives made it of a bullet flattened down to the desired diameter and thickness.

The mystic characters have been the subject of much study, and it is hoped that some learned individual or scientific body may yet be able to decipher them. Some think it possible that the little trinket may have belonged to Norsemen or other strangers who visited these shores in old time.

Another metallic object which is probably of Indian make, is a knife blade of sheet copper (Fig. 3), found about a mile below Cold Spring, and on ground which

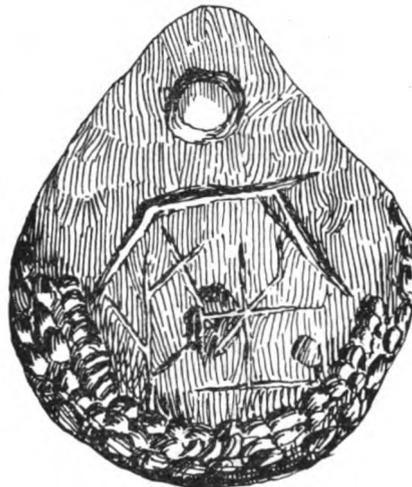


FIG. 2.—THE OTHER SIDE.

bears many evidences of Indian occupancy. The distinguishing feature of this implement is the method employed in mounting the blade for convenient use.

This was accomplished by folding about the wooden handle winglike projections of the metal which had been left at the base of the blade for that purpose. Such was the almost universal practice of those prehistoric workers in native copper in the vicinity of the great lakes where such mineral was produced. As in the case of the lead amulet the material for the manufacture of the knife blade was probably obtained from the whites; but in

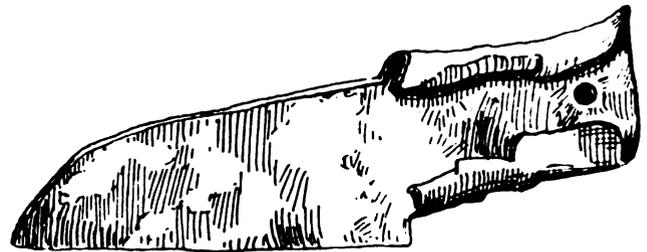


FIG. 3.—COPPER KNIFE.



FIG. 4.—A TERRA COTTA HEAD.

very early times, possibly when New Amsterdam was first settled by the Dutch colonists. De Vries, an early Dutch writer, says that the natives looked with longing upon the kettles of brass, wishing to

obtain them to make points for their arrows.

On a village site at Dennings Point, near Fiskill Landing, Mr. Nelson found a copper bead of native workmanship; and a large sheet of copper which appears to be of the unsmelted kind used by the Indians of the west. One relic in the Nelson collection easily surpasses all others found along the Hudson, and would be considered a prize in any museum. The object referred to is a little head (Fig. 4) or mask of burned clay, found in a gravel pit on the outskirts of Cold Spring village. To those familiar with such things, a glance is sufficient to suggest that the head is Mexican; and possibly it was obtained in trade from that far-off land. Such heads are found by the thousands in the cultivated fields about the ruins of the great pyramid of San Juan Teotihuacan; and strange to say few, very few are found with any portion of the body attached. Says A. Z. Gray in his little work, "Mexico as it is":

"For some mysterious reason, the Mexican artificer could only reproduce the masterpart of the human frame; and when we accept the theory that these countless fragilities were given by Aztec priests

connected with the temple to myriads of pilgrim worshippers, we can perhaps better conjecture about their secret forms."

If there be anything in the theory quoted, may not the Cold Spring head have been brought by an Indian pilgrim who had journeyed to the distant shrine. Mr. Nelson thinks there is a possibility that the head once served as an ear or ornament on a jar of ancient Mexican pattern; and there is a story that a vase of Mexican appearance was unearthed years ago near the spot where the little terra cotta head came to light.



Colorado wants to Exclude Consumptives.

Following the example of the city of San Francisco Board of Health, the Colorado State Board of Health has recommended that the great army of invalids who flock to that State for mountain air be excluded. The ground of the opposition to the welcoming of consumptives and other invalids is that pulmonary disease is spreading rapidly there, as in California.