

has been found in use among various tribes of American Indians, especially those living among the dense native forests, and it is cited by ethnologists as one of the indications of a common ancestry for many of the aboriginal tribes. In his "Song of Hiawatha," Longfellow says:

And they painted on the grave posts
Of the graves yet unforgetten,
Each his own ancestral totem,
Each the symbol of his household,
Figures of the bear and reindeer,
Of the turtle, crane and beaver.

The Sitka Indians, as do many others of the northern tribes, carve their household symbols, and in this work give evidence of considerable artistic ability, the sculpturing in many instances being very intricate and extremely lifelike. The tribes are divided into families, and each has its totem stick erected in front of the house of the head of the family. The size of the stick and amount of carving indicate the wealth and importance of the possessor. They vary from two to five feet in thickness, and often are sixty feet high. Where families intermarry the symbols are blended or independently carved on the same stick, causing many curious combinations and intermingling of devices. The most common figures are the eagle, raven, alligator and fish; there are also heads of men, birds and beasts of all descriptions, as well as many cabalistic symbols, which are apparently arbitrary in their significance. These works of art are produced at great expense, often costing from \$1,000 to \$2,000. A chief who has asserted his importance by procuring one of these wooden coats-of-arms, usually celebrates the occasion by giving a "potlatch," a word of the "Chinook jargon," signifying the promiscuous distribution of gifts. On such occasions blankets, arms and valuables of all kinds are bestowed upon the assembled multitude with a lavish hand, the donor not infrequently impoverishing himself by his liberality.

Sitka, the capital of Alaska—if such a term may be applied to a region which has no civil government—is the oldest settlement on the Pacific Coast north of California, with the exception of a few stations established by Russian fur traders among the Aleutian Islands and at Prince William's Sound. The Russian-American Trading Company was in full possession of Alaska in 1799, when Baranoff built a fort on Baranoff, or Sitka, Island, and named it "Fort Archangel Gabriel." In 1803 the fort was captured by the Indians and the garrison massacred; but the next year Baranoff rebuilt it and named it "New Archangel." It soon became of importance as a shipbuilding point, where the company constructed vessels for the transaction of its business. In 1832 Baron Wrangell transferred to Sitka the capital of Russian America, which had formerly been at St. Paul. Priests of the Greek Church, the established religion of Russia, came to New Archangel at an early date, and in 1834 this was made the seat of a bishopric. In 1837 a school was established for the children of the company's servants, and in 1841 an ecclesiastical school was founded, which four years later rose to the grade of a seminary. A school for native children was opened about the same

time. These were all discontinued after the American occupation; but the Presbyterians soon founded one, as did other denominations subsequently.

Sitka was quite a thriving town under the Russian rule; but having lost its importance with the departure of the company whose headquarters it was, and having lost much of its trade and population by reason of the mining camps of Harrisburg and Takou, it shows unmistakable signs of decay in its many empty houses, fast assuming a dilapidated and consequently "artistic" and "interesting" appearance. The most conspicuous structure is the Greek church, built in the form of a Greek cross, with emerald-green dome in the center, and a cupola-surmounted bell tower. The chapel occupies one wing of the edifice, and in its appointments is very magnificent. It contains a curious font and an exquisite painting of "The Virgin and Child," copied from the celebrated one at Moscow. The drapery of the figure is of silver, and the halo surrounding the head of gold, leaving nothing of the original painting to meet the eye but the faces and background. The effect is peculiar and striking. The ornaments, great candlestick and candelabra are of solid silver. The chancel is raised and is reached by three broad steps, leading to four doors, two of which are carved and gilded and ornamented with bas-reliefs. Above hangs a painting of "The Last Supper," and another on either side of the altar. These are covered with silver like that of the Madonna. No woman may cross the threshold of these doors, but they generally stand ajar, and the courteous priest in attendance willingly shows to visitors the gorgeous vestments and the bishop's crown, heavy with pearls and amethysts. The fittings of the church were presented to it by the Empress Catherine many years ago.

Rivaling the church in interest to the visitor is the old castle on the hill, once the home of the Russian governor, who ruled with almost despotic power, but now, alas, converted into a United States signal station. Once destroyed by fire and once prostrated by an earthquake, it was each time rebuilt. Signs of dilapidation are observable, but its massive walls will probably stand for generations. The desolation of its appearance lends an added charm to the legends which hang about it. One of these traditions is to the effect that Baron Romanoff, when occupying the castle as governor, had in his household a niece, an orphan whose guardian he was, a most beautiful young lady, as all traditionary maidens are or should be. She had bestowed her affections upon a young lieutenant, and when the Baron commanded her to wed a powerful prince, then stopping as a guest at the castle, she refused. The Romanoff, concealing his displeasure under a cloak of urbanity, gave the obstructing lieutenant an honorable command and dispatched him upon an expedition to some distance. During the absence of the lover the maiden yielded to the threats and demands of her stern uncle, and the wedding preparations were hastily made. The timid and heart-broken girl and the prince stood up before the priest, who solemnized the forced union, the marriage bells rang out their mock