

*Asclepias incarnata*. 'The fibres of the bark are strong, and capable of being wrought into a fine soft thread; but it is very difficult to separate the bark from the stalk. It is said to have been used by the Indians for bow-strings.'—*Vide* Cutler in *Memoirs of the American Academy*, vol. i., p. 424."—See description of this *Asclepias* in Dodge's *Useful Fiber Plants* (U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, 1897), pp. 71–72.

18 (p. 265).—The shields of the North American Indians were circular, somewhat convex, and 12 to 26 inches in diameter. The material was thick rawhide, usually that of the buffalo and elk—frequently hardened with glue, and contracted by heat; the process by which this was accomplished is fully described by Catlin, in his *Illustrations of N. Amer. Indians* (10th ed., London, 1866), vol. i., p. 241, with illustrations of shields, in plates 18, 101½. Champlain (*Voyages*, Laverdière's ed., p. 513) figures the leathern shield used by the Cheveux-Relevés (Algonkin). Lafitau (*Mœurs des Sauvages*, t. ii., p. 197) thus describes those of the Iroquois: "Their shields were of osier or of bark, covered with one or more skins stretched across; some of these are of but one skin, very thick. They have these shields of all sizes, and of all varieties of shape." Some fifty specimens of American shields are in the collection of the U. S. National Museum.

Besides their main defense, the shield, armor for the body was largely used by the American aborigines. This consisted of a sleeveless jacket or coat, or a wide band around the body, made of various substances fitted to ward off or resist blows. Various types of this armor—overlapping plates, wooden slats or rods laced together, skins, etc.—distinguished different groups of tribes. Those in use among the Atlantic tribes, though not extant in specimens, are sufficiently described by historians. Cartier (*Brief Récit*, Tross ed., fol. 27) thus mentions the armor of the Agouionda (apparently an Iroquois clan), as described to him by the people of Hochelaga: ". . . who are armed even to the fingers, showing us the fashion of their armor, which is of cords and wood, laced and woven together." Lafitau (*ut supra*) says: "Their cuirasses were also a tissue of wood, or of small reed-stems, cut in proportioned lengths, crowded closely together, very neatly woven and enlaced with small cords made of deerskin. They had cuisses and braces [armor for thighs and arms] of the same material. These cuirasses were proof against arrows armed with bone or stone, but not against those mounted with iron."

Consult Hough's "Primitive American Armor," in *U. S. Natl. Mus. Ann. Rep.*, 1893, pp. 627–651, for full description and numerous illustrations of defensive armor among American aborigines.