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THE STREET.

Basket Weaving

Written by Mrs. W. Markland Molson.



THE evolution of the basket from the material at hand began at such a remote period, and has been so gradual in its rise, that it is most difficult to trace its origin, but it seems to have been as old as the needs of woman.

The direction followed by the mechanical arts of a country is essentially determined by the material found in the country.

Baskets of brilliant coloring have been exhumed from Theban tombs and placed in European museums. The valuable papyrus furnished material for hats and baskets for the Egyptians, centuries before the Christian Era, and excavations in Peruvian tombs also disclose baskets that have been buried for centuries. Basketry preceded pottery, and ancient pottery often shows that the clay was rolled and twisted, and coiled about like the coils of basketry, and oftentimes it overlaid a basket which burned away in the firing of the clay, but impressions of the coiled basketry were left.

The women of Juan Fernandez plait from a single banana leaf a commodious fruit basket, and all sold together to passing ships, and afterwards the leaf is tossed into the sea; whereas the women of Attu Island, which is the most westerly island of the Aleutian Archipelago, spend their time and skill upon the finest basket that has yet come to the collectors. The Aleutian woman is a poor, degraded creature who lives in a sod hut, and her winters have four hours of daylight. The Alaskan tribes were wonderfully skilled in the twined stitch of basketry, and in their dyes and patterns, their