

solitudes. The digging of certain tenacious roots and cutting of twigs, bark and fibre, all of which must be cured, made into proper lengths and macerated to a desired flexibility before being woven into the intricate and enduring beauty of baskets. Coaxing from coy Nature her secrets of dyes, whether from peculiarly colored earth, charcoal, extracts of barks, or immersion in water.

Who of us, living in the Willamette valley, have not seen some ancient dame trudging home, with dew-bedraggled skirts, with a bundle of hazel sticks on her bent shoulders, after an early expedition to the copse, or, it may be, grasses and roots from a neighboring swamp? She is ancient; in our day, because the beautiful art is not taught to the young women; they do not desire to know it, and so the work is relegated to only the aged, who are skillful and learned.

Summer is the season for this preliminary work. The kindly elements favor these children of Nature, the twigs and grasses are flexible, the barks are easily peeled and are rich in juices, and the store of materials is gathered in.

We will first consider the work of the Aleuts of Atter island, the most westerly point of Ounalaska and the most remote and isolated of our possessions. In this little seagirt land, scarcely more than a stepping-stone to Asia, we discover the finest weave in the world of basketry. The barabas or home of the Aleuts is a sodden hut, for it is literally made of sod. The roof is gay with brilliant flowers during the long days of their brief summer, in winter it is inconceivably damp and dreary in the interior of the barabas, and it requires many months of these days of scanty and most welcome light to construct a single basket. Luxuriant grass springs up while the sunshine lingers, and this is gathered and dried and split many times. There is little variety of shape in these baskets; the finest are perfectly round, having covers and holding about a pint, and perpendicular; the others are much larger, have no covers, and are round and not so fine. The weave of the small ones is so fine as to closely resemble gros grain silk, the number of