

ALEUTIAN ISLANDS.

Mr. William H. Dall has contributed to the National Museum a large number of Aleut grass wallets, conoidal in form when filled (Fig. 1). The warp is of coarse straws, radiating from the center of the bottom. The covering or woof is made by plaiting or twisting two straws in a coil or twine, crossing them between each pair of warp straws. It is as if a twine of two strands had a straw or osier passed down through every half turn (Fig. 2). This plait or twine may be driven close home so as to be absolutely water-tight, or the weaver may leave spaces from one twine to the next wide enough to make a net. A very pretty effect is produced by these Aleutian basket-weavers by splitting the warp straws and twining woof straws around two of the half straws, joining 1 by 2, 3 by 4, 5 by 6, at one round, and the next twine inclosing 0 by 1, 2 by 3, 4 by 5, and so on. This produces a series of lozenge openings (Fig. 2). The split warp strands are often crossed to form X-shaped openings, or carried straight so as to produce parallelograms. I have observed the same effect in Peruvian mummy cloth, but a greater variety of network is there produced by alternating the rectangular and lozenge meshes in bands varying in width.

In the "Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge," No. 318, plate 7, Mr. Dall figures and describes the matting of the Aleutian Islanders found in the caves in the Catherina Archipelago.

The method of manipulation in the matting is the same as that just described for the basketry of the Aleuts, and the delicacy of workmanship is most admirable. This method of weaving by means of twining two woof strands around a series of warp strands occurs in many places, and will hereafter in this paper receive the name of "twined basketry."

In a covered basket made of split bamboo from the Malabar coast the fastening off at the top of the basket and the weaving of the cover have a three-stranded twine. At every third of a turn the splint that is inward is hooked or passed behind the warp splint at that point. This produces a very smooth effect on the inside and a rough surface without.

The mats of the Aleuts are made of the fiber of the *Elymus** treated as hemp. The ornamentation on the outside of the mats and baskets is formed by embroidering on the surface with strips of the straw instead of the macerated fiber which forms the body of the fabric. The embroidery stitches in these, as in most savage basketry, does not always pass through the fabric, but are more frequently whipped on, the stitches passing always between the two woof strands, as in aresene embroidery, showing only on the outside. Mr. Dall justly praises the marvelous nicety of this Aleutian grass-weaving, both in mats and basketry.

There is no Chinese or Japanese basket in the National Museum showing this plaited weft. The grass of these Aleutian wallets is exceed-

* *Elymus mollis*, Sitka, Norton Sound, Kotzebue Sound; *E. arenarius*, Norton Sound, to Point Barrow; *E. Sibiricus*, Sitka. (See Rothrock, Smithsonian Report, 1867.)