

The Basket Work of the Indians of the Pacific Coast, which is exhibited in the South Gallery is noteworthy from many points of view. Collected by an expert from points along the Fraser, the Skeena and the Thompson Rivers, from Fort Rupert and Port Douglas, from Sechelt and Lytton and from the west coast of Vancouver Island, it represents what is best in Canadian Indian Basketry, and some of the specimens compare not unfavourably with that remarkable collection of the Basketry of the Indians of the Western States, owned by Mrs. William Markland Molson and shown at the Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts in 1900.

Attention is drawn to some of the older specimens now shown :—

No. 110a was made to celebrate a great dance that marked some piping time of peace in the far past history of the Yale tribe.

No. 112a was once the property of the wife of a chief of this tribe.

No. 118a, a Sechelt basket, is very old, while the burden basket, numbered 140a, is also of great age.

The workmanship in many of these baskets is remarkably skilled and fine. No. 23b is a Sechelt basket double-woven and beautifully finished, and No. 130a, a Port Douglas specimen, with handle, is especially good. Many of the small baskets show very fine handiwork, and the quality of the materials and dyes give them great softness and beauty.

The decoration is interesting, and, in many cases, extremely artistic. No. 61b with the wavy lines representing mountains and valleys—the skyline possibly that the weaver saw as she sat at her work; the “lightning” pattern of 19b; the human figures that decorate 102a; the fine design of the Sechelt burden basket, No. 105a; the child’s berry basket, 122a, from the Fraser River district, with its tracery of letters and figures, all mark the artistic feeling that obtains among the Red Men where white influence has not dulled and degraded it.