

FIG 1

THERE is hardly any limit to the number and variety of baskets that can be made of cane when once the easy art of weaving them is understood. Almost everyone appreciates baskets useful or ornamental, and they can be made at home with far more ease and economy than the uninitiated would suppose.

Of course the worker's first requisite is a due supply of materials. The cane itself is sold in large skins and at prices varying from 1s. to 3s. the pound. The sizes of it range from the coarse, which is about equal in size to an ordinary lead pencil, to the finest, which may be compared to a No. 17 knitting-needle. Some of the makes of cane are round, and, if coarse, principally used for the spokes or uprights of the baskets; others are split; others again flat on both surfaces and useful for weaving only.

In fancy baskets coloured straw-plait is sometimes used. This is procurable in different tints and in lengths of six dozen yards. By the dozen yards also are sold rush, a soft green plait very effective for mixing in with the canes; and raffia, similar in weaving, but cream-coloured and much finer.

So much for materials. Tools are few in number and need not be obtained by those desirous of beginning on a small scale only. There are nippers to be had to cut the cane, but a strong knife and scissors do their work quite well. For the piercer, whose uses are to force the weaving apart temporarily and to bore holes in coarse canes or soft wood, a stout stiletto or similar homely tool can be substituted.

Baskets having no bottom are sometimes made on a wooden frame or base, which is

small baskets according as the outer or inner circles of holes is made use of.

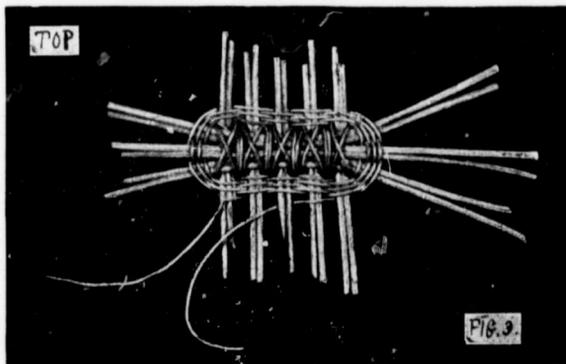
Where a basket is to have a permanent wooden base, this can be bought or cut to any shape ordered. Only the sides have then to be woven, but the finished article cannot be ranked so highly as one in which the bottom is woven as well as the upper portion.

The question as to the sizes of cane with which a beginner should practise is a difficult one, some authorities recommending the use of the finest. As better work can be done with medium sizes, the little extra difficulty felt at first in managing these is soon compensated.

It is a good plan for a novice when applying for cane to mention the purposes for which it

is required. One end of the weaving thread is pushed down behind from A to B, and the whole held in the left hand while the fingers of the right direct the weaver in front of the four uprights at the top, under the four right-hand spokes, over the four bottom ones, and under the left-hand ones. This should be repeated, but at the last, with the weaver under two only of the side strands, then over and under two alternately for two rows. Push the odd spoke in at the back of the weaving at C and work alternately over and under one spoke only until the base or circle is large enough.

Fig. 2 shows a small woven circle and some open borders. For border A, each spoke is sharpened and pushed down close to the one



is required. This because sizes vary in number with different makers, and to ensure that the spokes are not too fine for the working strands and *vice versa*.

For spokes, No. 10 (round) is, for baskets of average size strong and amply coarse; for weaving over it, 4, 5 or 6 in round, and 6, 8 or 10 in flat cane will be found good average sizes.

On receiving the hanks of cane, cut the strings only enough to enable the strands to be drawn out singly. Wind each loosely round and round the hand and put to soak from ten to forty minutes according to texture.

Every worker will desire to begin with a mat or basket which can afterwards be made

useful. The easiest way of weaving a centre

for either of these articles is seen in the earliest stage at Fig. 1. The coarse cane, when well soaked, should be laid on a cloth or tray and cut to the lengths required for the spokes. For a mat, cut each the length of the diameter, with an added eight to sixteen inches for the edges. For a basket, measure the depth of both sides, and the width of the

bottom, and add to this the extra allowance for the edge or border. For this round weaving always cut one extra spoke half the length of the others.

In Fig. 1 eight long spokes are used, four crossed over the centre of the other four.

next to it; at B, the end of each spoke is beside the next but one; at C, two spokes are missed, and the end of the first is inserted beside the third spoke.

An oval base for mat or basket is illustrated at Fig. 3. The six long strands here are crossed first over a pair of shorter upright ones. The weaver, inserted as before, is so bound over to secure these in place as to form a cross on the right side of the work; then two upright stitches are made on the long strands only; another pair of side strands is affixed with a cross bind, and so on until five pairs in all are in position. A second weaver is now needed and the two are taken together alternately one over and the other under the pairs of spokes until the oval is large enough.

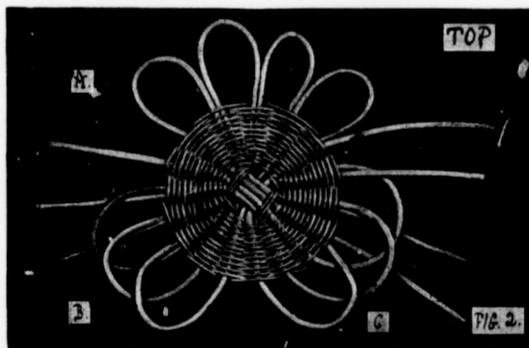
On even spokes it is not possible to use one weaver alternately under and over one spoke as in simple or plain weaving.

As the work proceeds it must be damped and pulled into place to keep it a good shape.

Another way of working over an even number of spokes is illustrated at Fig. 4. Here also the weavers are used in pairs and together. The first is placed behind, the second in front of each spoke, and between each pair of spokes the weavers cross, that which was formerly below being raised before placing it behind a spoke.

In Fig. 5, A is shown yet another way of working with two weavers together. This plan can only be pursued on an unequal number of spokes or the repeat would not come true.

B (also Fig. 5) shows four weavers used together much as the two were in Fig. 4. Begin with one; place it in front of four, and behind one spoke, afterwards before three and behind one. Starting the other three weavers in the same place, put the next always in front of two and behind one; the third before two, behind one; the fourth before one and behind one. After starting thus, bring each in turn before three and behind one,



really a round piece of oak pierced with several rings of holes through which the canes are pushed, while the sides of the basket are formed by inter-weaving. The frame is afterwards drawn off, and so can be used an indefinite number of times and for large or

bottom, and add to this the extra allowance for the edge or border. For this round weaving always cut one extra spoke half the length of the others.

In Fig. 1 eight long spokes are used, four crossed over the centre of the other four.