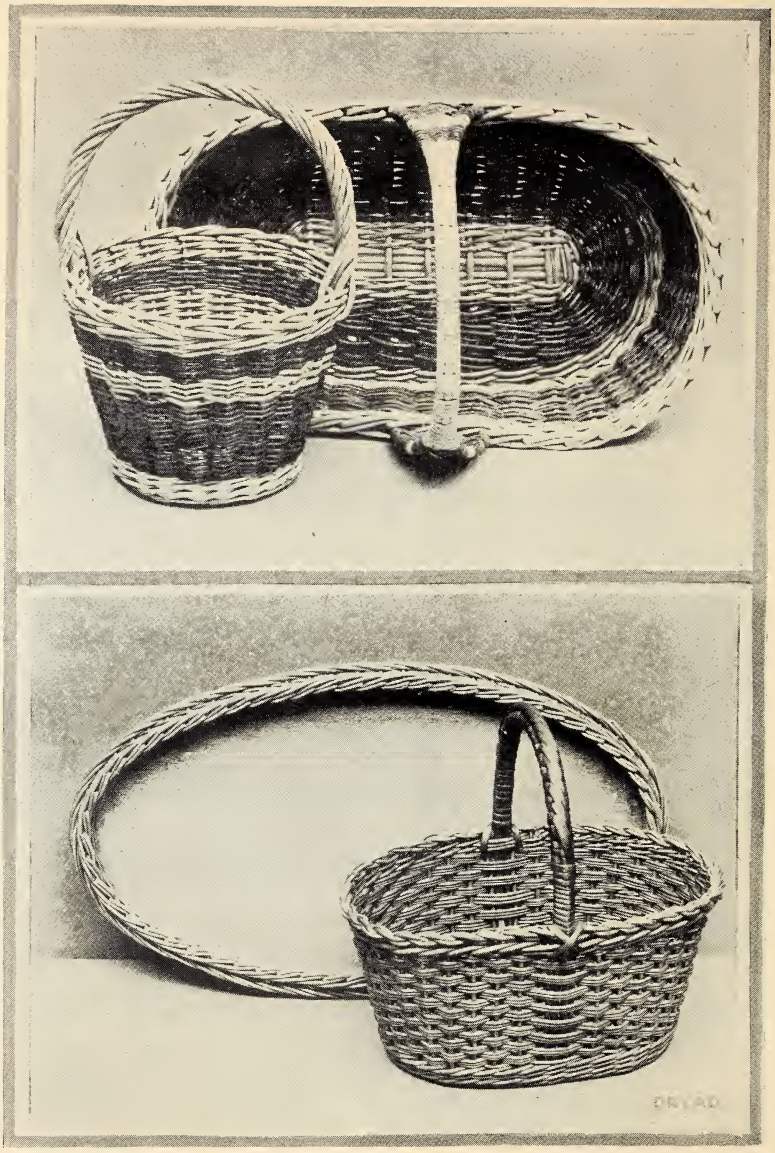
FINE WILLOW BASKETRY

by

A. G. Knock

THE DRYAD PRESS



Above : Round Brown and White Blackberry Basket and Oval Brown and White Garden Basket.
Below : Oval Buff Shopping Basket and Willow-edged Tray.

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By A. G. KNOCK

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CONTENTS.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

(These examples were made by the writer.)

INTRODUCTION.

"When young and old in circle around the firebrands close,
When the girls are weaving baskets and the lads are shaping bows."
—*Macaulay.*

THE word "fine" in the title of this little book has been chosen to express those qualities of slenderness, smallness, and delicacy which differentiate this class of basketry from the larger and coarser kinds ; but at the outset it is suggested that the word be understood to include those higher attributes of perfection, refinement, elegance, and beauty, for which the word also stands. In another sense "fine" is synonymous with "pure" and "free from foreign matter," and it is intended that the word as used here shall, with one or two minor exceptions, embrace this meaning as well. In the main it is the home-grown willow that is treated of ; and the student is shown, as far as such things can be shown in a book, how to manipulate it by traditional British methods. The word traditional is aptly applied to willow basketry, for, with the exception of "The Art of Basket-Making" (Pitman) by Thomas Okey (now Dr. Okey), lately Professor of Italian at Cambridge, no book worthy of serious consideration has, so far as the writer is aware, been published in this country. This present effort is in no way whatever an attempt to supersede Dr. Okey's work, for which, and for its learned author, the present writer has the greatest respect, and readers are recommended to study Dr. Okey's treatise which deals with the subject in a more general way, and to regard the present work as an augmentation of it, dealing in greater detail with one particular section. Writings on "Cane work" are more extensive but the majority of them will be of little use to those seeking information on willow work, and may indeed be positively harmful. "Cane Work" by Charles Crampton (who is incidentally a master craftsman in willow), published by The Dryad Press, can be regarded as the standard work on this branch of the subject. In it fine cane work is treated of on lines based on the traditional methods employed by willow workers when using whole rattan cane ; and the hint may be thrown out here that the worker in centre-cane cannot do better than cling as closely as possible to that tradition, for monetary as well as utilitarian and aesthetic reasons.

On its historical side basket-making is rich in romance, Its beginnings are lost in the misty dawn of civilisation, but there is no question as to its great antiquity. Neolithic tribes employed it to meet most of the requirements of daily life. Markings on very early ceramic ware prove that basket moulds were used for the shaping of earthenware vessels before the introduction of the potters' wheel ; and it is highly probable that the first pot of all was the result of placing a wicker vessel daubed with clay upon a fire. Textile weaving developed from

basket-work, the first crude webs being produced by laying a set of rushes on the ground for the warp upon which the weft of similar material was woven with the fingers. The American Indians have from time immemorial practised basketry of the coiled type, weaving into their pieces motifs, of rare beauty of form and colour, portraying, for those who have eyes to see, the thoughts and aspirations of their primitive minds. The Ancient Briton built his coracle of wicker, and the Druid constructed huge wicker cages shaped in human form in which to burn his human sacrifices.

As basketry is one of the oldest so it is also one of the most universal of the arts ; and there is no record of any race past or present which has not had some knowledge of it. Naturally indigenous materials were, and in the main still are, used, each race building up through the centuries a tradition based on its national characteristics and the possibilities and limitations of its native materials. In common with other peoples we in this country have our tradition in basketry, and this little book is an attempt to add to the embodiment of that tradition in the more precise and lasting form of the written word.

Basket-making, particularly willow basket-making, is essentially a handicraft, and as such is of considerable educational value in training the hand and eye, developing a sense of form and proportion, and inculcating those higher virtues of patience, care and neatness. Economically its practice on a larger scale in this country would not only provide employment for makers, but encourage the cultivation of basket willows which, given proper attention, are some of the most profitable of agricultural products. It must be added, however, that no ready-made market for fine basketry exists, that is at a price which would compensate the producer for the time, care and skill necessary to its production. Continental village industries, aided by the State and by superior organisation, lower standards of living, longer working hours, and favourable rates of exchange have supplanted the home producer, and the market will not easily be regained. The education of the public which in the main does not know a good basket from an indifferent one, is a necessary factor in bringing about a revival of willow basketry in this country, for it is upon quality and fine workmanship that any revival must, it is thought, be based. As an artcraft, willow basketry may be capable of considerable development, providing sufficient space is available and the practitioner has strong fingers. But it is not a craft that can be mastered in a few lessons, and still less by mere study of a book such as this. Perseverance, patience, and practice are required—above all practice. The professional basket-maker has to serve at least three years' apprenticeship, working five and a half days a week, before he is proficient. This is not necessary in the case of the craftworker, who can limit the range of work undertaken, and can afford to ignore some of the nicer points of craftsmanship

which, admirable as they are, are perhaps rated too highly in the trade, only to be passed over unnoticed by anyone not himself a basket-maker. But to enter seriously upon basket-making as a profession some training in or near a workshop should be had, or, failing this, tuition from a practical basket-maker with workshop experience, Of one thing the novice can be assured, he has no competition on the part of the machine to worry about, although machine-made substitutes for baskets are only too prevalent. A further point in favour of this primitive and old-world craft is that only a small initial outlay is required for tools and materials ; indeed, it is possible for the worker to grow all the material required on his own plot of land.

While it is strongly urged that traditional methods be adhered to, the same argument does not apply in the case of designs, and a large variety of pattern and an infinite variety of shape is possible, the latter being suggested by everyday objects such as boxes, bowls, vases, and other *bric-a-brac* found in every home. The baskets of commerce can also be taken as models and produced in miniature as, for example, the familiar Christmas hamper. In this little manual restraint has been exercised with regard to the designs used as examples ; and the reader is recommended to master the traditional forms exemplified here before giving rein to his fancy.

One thing is important. As soon as the novice gains some mastery over his material, he should endeavour to work strictly to a shape and measurements previously determined upon. Nothing is easier than to allow the work to get out of hand ; and if this happens it is useless to attempt to make it "come right." There is only one remedy and that the drastic one of cutting down the work to the point where it started to go wrong and doing it over again.

In the practice of basket-making speed is an important factor as the work is mainly a repetition of a few simple weaves or strokes. The expert attains speed not by strain and hurry, but by the elimination of all superfluous motions, a point to which the novice should give careful attention, particularly in the preliminary "cutting out" of material, For example, it is far quicker to "slype" all the "stakes" at one operation than to do each one separately and insert it in the bottom before doing the next. An hour or so spent in watching an expert basket-maker will be an eye-opener in this respect.

It is customary to urge upon the learner the desirability of mastering one step before proceeding to the next, but, while the soundness of this maxim as a general proposition is not questioned, ten years' experience as an instructor has not engendered in the writer any great respect for its practical utility as applied to basketry, Broadly speaking, round work is the simplest, oval work coming next and lastly rectangular or "square" as it is called in the trade ; but the fact is that every kind of basket includes some work that is comparatively easy,

and some that is comparatively difficult, and the learner can exercise a considerable amount of latitude as to which kind of basket he shall attempt at any given stage of his progress. Wooden bottoms or bases are of material assistance in the earlier attempts, but it is more craftsmanlike, except in the case of trays, to make the article of willow throughout if the shape is a fairly simple one. In the case of more intricate shapes, however, wooden bases are a necessity. Wooden shapes or moulds and other mechanical devices for ensuring a perfect and uniform shape, useful as they admittedly are, have not been dealt with here except for two examples, as the object of this little work is not so much to show how standard commercial baskets can be produced for profit with the minimum expenditure of time, trouble, and skill, but rather how to regard the work as an art-craft capable of combining beauty and originality with usefulness and fitness for purpose. The exterior decoration of baskets by spraying, dipping, dyeing or brush-painting, or by the addition of barbola, raffia, etc., has not been touched upon either. Some will prefer the natural beauty of the willow unadorned, and those wishing to apply some form of decoration will find plenty of information available, supplied by experts in the various decorative mediums. Apart from air-spraying (for which an expensive plant is necessary) and dyeing with Bismarck Brown, practically the only finish employed in the trade is spirit varnish, that known as White Hard being suitable either for white or buff, and Brown Hard for buff only.

As Dr. Okey rightly observes, little is done officially to foster the craft of basket-making in this country. The City and Guilds of London Institute has an examination in the subject ; the Worshipful Company of Basketmakers of the City of London do what they can by way of examinations and exhibitions ; and experimental work in connection with willow culture is being carried out at the Long Ashton Agricultural Research Station. To these activities may be added the useful work carried out as part of the general activities of the Rural Industries Bureau and its affiliated organisations and by schools and colleges of arts and crafts in a few places. A hopeful sign of the times is the increasing interest now being displayed in craftsmanship in general, by which basketry in common with other handicrafts cannot fail to benefit in the years that lie immediately ahead.

In concluding these introductory notes, the writer feels that, although this little manual has been written without direct assistance, it would be most remiss of him not to acknowledge with feelings of respect and gratitude his indebtedness and the indebtedness of the craft to a number of people who have done much to further its interests. Among these may be singled out for special reference Mr. W. Paulgrave Ellmore, Dr. Thomas Okey, and Mr. H. H. Peach, names with which the novice basket-maker will speedily become familiar if he is at all earnest in his search for authoritative information.

WILLOWS: THEIR GROWTH, HARVESTING AND PREPARATION FOR USE.

"Cato held an osier bed in higher estimation than an olive plantation, or than wheat or meadow land."—*Pliny.*

Concerning the indigenous raw material of basket-making, the willow, osier, or withy, the layman has little knowledge and that little is usually so vague and mixed with error as to be even more dangerous than a little knowledge generally is. For example, many people suppose that baskets are made from shoots cut from a pollarded willow tree. Again, the notion is only too prevalent that basket willows thrive best in boggy land. There is also some confusion between willows and canes; and the writer has seen gypsies cutting the "sallow" (*S. Caprea,* useless for basket work) and heard of them being credited with making wicker chairs and baskets from it. As a matter of fact, few if any gypsies now make anything except clothes pegs, for which they use the "sallow" if available. The chairs and baskets sold by them are obtained from factors and are mainly imported.

One cannot go out and cut basket-making material from the hedgerow. Basket willows require careful selection, cultivation, harvesting, seasoning, and preparation for use if first-class results are to be obtained; and it will be well, therefore, if we deal briefly with these important matters here. The information will be of use not only to those who desire to grow willows, but also to the greater number who will buy their willows ready for use, as it will assist them to interpret the signs indicating virtues or defects in the material presented for sale. Also, it is hoped that an outline of the various processes which experience has shown to be absolutely indispensable, will deter the reader from attempting "short cuts" or embarking on speculative adventures such as buying a plot of willows as it stands without the necessary facilities for converting it into usable material.

Willows belong to the genus *Salix*, which includes a large number of varieties and hybrids, upon the classification of which no two botanical authorities are in agreement. Broadly speaking, basket willows may be classed as shrubs rather than as trees, and are to be found only in cultivated "beds" or "holts." About seventy varieties are supposed to exist, but exact classification is extremely difficult owing to the different characteristics exhibited by the same variety when grown on different soils. Important considerations arising from this fact are, firstly, that variety and soil should be suited to each other, and, secondly, that willows of the same variety grown on different soils should not be mixed for "buffing" as varying shades of colour may result. It may be added in passing, that the difference in shade would be greater if different varieties were mixed, or if willows reputed to be of the one variety were not all true to their kind.

The best soil for a willow ground is strong loam, but basket willows of some kind will grow on any soil except peat—not, however, fine willows for fine basket-making. The soil conditions affect not only the proportions and colour of the willow, but also the texture of the wood and the proportionate size of the pith. Hence willows grown on rich, heavy soils are to be preferred to those grown on lighter soils. A sufficiency of moisture is required, but fine willows do not need so much as is popularly supposed, and gardens or fields which will produce ordinary crops satisfactorily may be used with success for the growing of the smaller varieties of the basket willow.

The three species most commonly used for basket-work are: *S. Viminalis*, *S. Triandra*, and *S. Purpurea*. The willows, which are usually one-year shoots, are known to the trade as rods, the term "sticks" being applied to very stout rods, usually of two or three years' growth, used for chair frames, bottoms and lids of large hampers, and similar purposes where stoutness is required. Rods of the *S. Viminalis* species are often called "osiers," their characteristics being a relatively large proportion of pith, coarser wood texture, thick tops and larger size. One or two varieties of this species are suitable for making skeins, but, apart from this, they are not used in fine basketry. Rods of the other two species have finer tops, closer texture, less pith, and superior working qualities, and are sometimes called willows to distinguish them from *S. Viminalis*. For our present purpose we can exclude *S. Viminalis* altogether, as the making of frames would be outside the scope of most readers and for skein-making varieties of *S. Triandra* are quite suitable.

Of the two species *S. Triandra* and *S. Purpurea*, the former is the larger, Black Maul, a well-known variety of this species, producing rods 4ft. to 6ft. in length. These are of excellent quality, suitable for either white or buff, and for skein making. The Pomeranian is a somewhat smaller rod of the same species particularly well adapted to fine work, as it is slender and of excellent quality, and, like the Black Maul, will produce either white or buff. *S. Purpurea* provides us with the smallest willow grown, the Dicky Meadows or Red Bud. This, however, does not make good white, and is therefore used exclusively as buff. The rods which are slender, wiry and pliable range from 1ft.3in. to 3ft.6in. All three varieties mentioned can be dried for use as "brown," the trade term for rods of any colour which have been dried with the peel on.

These three varieties—Black Maul, Pomeranian,and Dicky Meadows —will provide the full range of willows required in fine basket-work, and the selection could hardly be improved upon, although in cases where the soil or other conditions are definitely unsuitable some other variety or varieties might be substituted with advantage. Before planting, advice should be obtained from a practical grower if possible.

Useful information is contained in "The Cultivation of Osiers and Willows," 1/6 post free, from the Ministry of Agriculture, 10 Whitehall Place, London, S.W.1.

Basket willows are propagated by means of cuttings or "sets" 9in. to 12in. long, cut from well-grown rods in the green state. The sets are planted in rows from 16in. to 21in. apart, the distance between sets being from 10in. to 15in. Each set is pushed into the ground so that only about 2in. of it remains above the surface, the buds pointing upwards. In the Lancashire willow-growing areas where Dicky Meadows is largely grown, it is usual to plant this variety in rows 21in. apart, with a distance of 10in. between sets. Planting to these measurements, approximately 30,000 sets per acre are required. The distance between sets could be increased to 12in. in the case of the Pomeranian variety and 14in. or 15in. for the Black Maul. Planting can be done at any time from the end of October to the time of the commencement of sap activity in the following spring, usually about the middle of April, but it is essential that before planting the ground shall have been thoroughly dug or ploughed to a depth of 9in., cleared of weeds, and had some little time to settle. During the growing period the ground between the sets is kept free from weeds by hoeing.

The first or "maiden" crop is usually of little or no value, but is cut so that the heads (as the sets are known when they produce rods) are free to produce a more valuable crop in the next season.

The rods should be cut off with a sharp knife as closely as possible to the head, the cutting being done any time after leaf fall if the rods are to be "pitted." "Pitting" consists in standing the bundles in two or three inches of running water, and allowing them to remain until the following spring when they will break into leaf and remain fit for peeling for three or even four months.

Alternatively, the rods may be left on the head till the spring, then cut and peeled at once, but this must be done before the second year's growth, immediately under the skin, begins, otherwise the rods will be "double-skinned" in which state they are useless for fine work. "Pitting" eliminates all danger of "double-skin."

For producing buff, the rods, which may be cut at any time after half the leaf has fallen, are boiled in suitable tanks for from two to five hours or more, according to the nature of the rod and the soil conditions, and then peeled and dried. Peeling, whether for white or buff, is performed by means of the fingers in the case of very small rods, or in metal "brakes," several types of which are on the market. After being peeled the rods are dried in the sun and wind before being tied up for storage.

For making "brown" the rods are left on the heads until all the leaf has fallen, then cut and thoroughly dried in the open air.

Proper bundling and grading is a necessary item in successful willow growing. It is the practice of most growers at present simply to "draft" the rods, that is to grade them according to length only. This is hardly sufficient and in consequence basket firms have to employ sorters to grade the rods according to size, or pay the skilled basket-maker a price based on his ordinary earnings to do this work, which could be done quite as well by unskilled labour at half the cost. The lengths into which rods are drafted by growers are approximately as follows, the trade name (still largely used) for the particular length being given also : 3ft., Tacks ; 4ft., Short-Small ; 5ft Long-Small ; 6ft., Threepenny; 7ft., Middleboro ; 8ft., Great. Very small rods, such as Dicky Meadows are graded into four or five lengths, the shortest consisting of rods up to 18in.

Willows are sold by weight, by the "bundle" and by the "bolt." Three bundles are approximately the equivalent of two bolts, the respective weights varying with the length of rods. Fine willows are supplied in small quantities for craftworkers by the Dryad Handicrafts, who also supply the large standard "bundles."

Willows must be stored in a dry place or they will become mildewed. For the same reason, any watered material left over from a particular job should be thoroughly dried before being stored away. Before beginning work a rough estimate should be formed of the material likely to be used within the next two days, and that amount only should be soaked, the soaking of the rods in water being necessary to render them sufficiently pliable to be worked. Brown rods should be left under water for two or three days, and then be allowed to lie under a damp cloth for another day to get mellow. In common with white and buff rods, they will remain covered till needed for immediate use. White and buff rods require only from a quarter-of-an-hour to one hour under water, the time varying according to the size and hardness of the rods. Boiling may be resorted to in the case of brown, but not buff or white for which cold water is used. After removal from water the white or buff rods should lie for at least an hour under the cloth before being used. During the working it will be found that white and buff quickly dry and it will be necessary from time to time to dip the unfinished part of the work in water or use a sponge or small piece of cloth to swab it occasionally. It is quite unnecessary to work with wet hands or material, and after applying water, the hands should be wiped and the rods allowed to drain before work is resumed.

Skeins require only a dip in water and a minute or two to drain, but they will work better after laying under the cloth for a time.

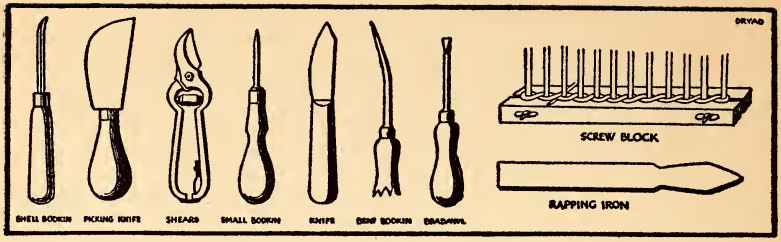
THE WORKSHOP, PLANT AND TOOLS.

Willow work cannot be carried out successfully in an ordinary living-room without causing inconvenience to other occupants and "making a mess." It is, therefore, necessary to have a room or workshop set apart entirely for the purpose. Perhaps the ideal method for the homeworker is to have a workshop erected in the garden or elsewhere away from the house, as willows and wicker-ware are somewhat bulky to handle within doors, and there is also the question of soaking the material.

A separate workshop might consist of a wooden structure 12ft. by 8ft. or thereabouts, with walls 6ft. high and roof sloping to 8ft. in centre. The space under roof could be utilised for storing willows these being supported on beams running from side to side. The door could be at one end and a window capable of being opened might with advantage run the length of one side facing south if possible. There should be ventilators at either end, the floor should be boarded, and arrangements must be made for heating and artificial light. Shelves are apt to impede the free movement of the willows during work, but a closed cupboard will not be in the way and will be found very convenient.

Professional willow basket-makers work on the floor or on a "plank" raised an inch or so above it, a low box or stool being placed at one end against the wall for use as a seat in some parts of the work. This is undoubtedly the best method for heavy work, but for light work a table and chair can be used. It is suggested that the worker sits at the side of table, which should be as low as possible relative to his own position, the rods in use lying on either side with their butts towards him. To prevent the rods from falling off table, boards may be fixed at either end at right angles to table top, forming fences about 6in. in height. The bulk of the prepared material can lie on the floor to the worker's left, covered with the damp cloth, only those rods required for immediate use being upon the table.

THE TANK OR TROUGH.—Small quantities of fine willows can be soaked in a large bath, but this is not a very convenient container, and a galvanised tank with inside flange should be procured if basket-work is to be taken up seriously. This need not be large, say, 4ft. by 1ft. 6in., by 1ft. deep, or even smaller; the exact proportions do not matter very much. In some cases rain-water tanks will be available, but water in which willows are soaked must be fairly clean. The tank is kept nearly full of water, and the rods are kept under by wooden sinkers, whose ends fit under the inside flange. Such a tank with proper heating apparatus could be used for buffing willows also. Arrangements must be made for periodically emptying and filling the tank by means of a hose pipe or other method and a tap on the outside near bottom.



A plug attached to a chain on inside of tank is not a convenient fitment. The tank will be situated against or near the workshop, but not inside it. For keeping material in condition after removal from tank a small pot or other vessel filled with water and a sponge or cloth kept in the workshop will mainly be relied on.

The Work-board.—Two forms of work-board are shown in the illustration, p. 65. That at the bottom will probably be preferred for small articles, but in the case of deep baskets such as linen baskets, it is not possible to remain seated at table, as the work gets so high as to be out of reach. It then becomes necessary either to stand or to use the larger board shown above, with its nearer end lowered and resting on a stool or other support. Baskets with sloping sides should never be in a flat position when being worked, but should slope away from worker a such an angle as to bring the sides as nearly upright as possible.

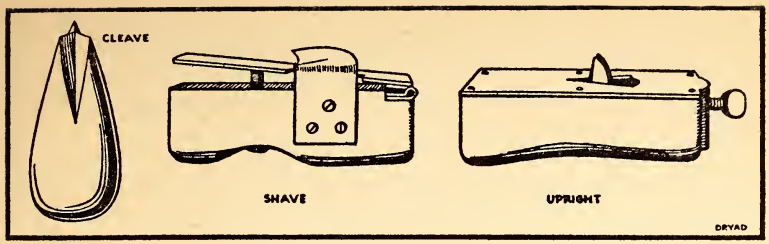
The Screw-block.—This is used for holding the sticks when bottoms and lids of rectangular baskets are being made, the methon being described later. The correct form is shown in the illustration.

The Hand-knife.—So called to distinguish it from the picking-knife. The worker is warned against the "basket-maker's knife" sold by tool merchants, which is much too large and heavy for our purpose, and is now seldom used even by heavy workers. One such as that illustrated should be chosen, with short blade and comfortable handle. The blade should be sharp right up to the ferrule.

The Picking-knife.—This is a special tool for cutting off surplus ends after the basket is made, and that shown is of the shape best suited to the purpose. The blade is sharpened only along the end, the surplus ends being severed by pressing downwards as will be explained later.

Sharpening Stone.—Both the above-mentioned knives must be kept absolutely sharp, for which purpose a whetstone or oilstone may be used. From time to time it will be necessary to have the knives ground also.

Shears.—These are similar to gardeners' pruning shears, and those illustrated are ideal for fine basket work. Shears having the spring extending along the inside of one handle should be avoided. It



is seldom necessary to have shears sharpened, an occasional drop of oil where the two halves meet being all that is necessary to keep them in good order.

THE BODKINS.—These, as will be seen from the illustration, are not the bodkins used in needlework, but pointed implements similar to that referred to by Hamlet in his famous soliloquy. Three kinds are shown. The Shell Bodkin is used to facilitate the passing through of a rod by pushing it along the hollow end and then withdrawing the bodkin. The Bent Bodkin comes in handy for inserting handle-bows into the curved sides of a basket and similar operations. The ordinary straight type of bodkin, which is made in several sizes is used in "staking up," "cramming off," and whenever a passage has to be made for a rod to be passed through. In order to avoid repetition the use of the bodkin is not referred to in the working instructions given later; but it should be clearly understood that the bodkin is in frequent use, and is a great saver of time and patience.

THE GREASE-HORN.—Many basket-makers still use an actual ram's horn for the purpose, but any kind of tube about half-an-inch in diameter and four or five inches long, closed at one end is suitable. This contains Russian tallow or similar grease, and into it the bodkin is thrust before use. It is particularly useful when the bodkin has to be inserted through a stick as in pegging a handle or "staking up" a rectangular basket. The bodkin remains in the grease-horn when not in use.

THE RAPPING OR BEATING IRON.—That illustrated is suitable for the finest work, but one somewhat heavier will be more appropriate for larger and relatively coarser baskets. Its chief function is to close down the work, and it is used also in "levelling off," driving in "crams," and for any other purpose where hammer-like blows are required.

THE CLEAVE, SHAVE AND UPRIGHT.—These are used for making skeins as explained in the section dealing with Skein Work. The cleave illustrated is known as a three-way; four-way cleaves are obtainable but are rather more difficult to manipulate and seldom used, Two types of shave are used in this country, the wooden and the brass. the latter having a slanting blade which does away with the necessity

for readjustment to secure a thinner cut. It is, however, more difficult to manipulate than the wooden shave shown in illustration, which has a blade level with the metal plate. The Upright is used only for very special work, its function being to shave the skein to a uniform width throughout its length.

THE RULE OR MEASURE-STICK.—An ordinary rigid carpenter's rule is quite suitable. This can be 2 ft. long, or 3 ft. if the size of the work necessitates, and should be plainly marked in inches sub-divided into eighths.

THE BRADAWL.—This is for pinning the work to board. One with a thin, long blade is best for the purpose. The awl is driven through the centre of the basket bottom into the work-board, so that the edge of the bottom is flush with the end of the board ; in the case of an oval or oblong bottom, its end will be flush with the end of the board. A leaden weight or flat-iron may be used either with or without the bradawl to keep the basket steady. Another method adopted by some workers is to have a round lead or iron weight with a hole in the centre. This is placed in the centre of the bottom, and a long, thin awl or bodkin (such as a chair-caning bodkin) is passed through the hole in the weight and driven through the basket bottom into the board. The weight prevents the awl or bodkin from working out as the result of the constant turning of the basket.

A useful addition to the tool kit is a pair of pincers for withdrawing or pulling through rods which cannot be conveniently dealt with by the fingers.

TECHNICAL TERMS.

Technical terms are a practical necessity for the efficient study and practice of any subject of a technical nature, and the reader should take the necessary pains to acquaint himself with those given below which have been reduced to the minimum compatible with the needs of fine basketry. The terms are those in common use by professional basket-makers and, in the opinion of the writer, no good purpose would be served by substituting newly-coined ones for them.

BORDER.—The piece of work which neatly finishes off the sides, lid or foot of a basket, and formed by bringing down the stakes and working them into a definite pattern.

BOW.—The stout rod which forms the core or centre of a handle.

BUTT.—The thick end of a willow rod.

BYE-STAKES.—Extra stakes inserted after the upsetting.

CRAM.—The end of a rod pointed, turned at right angles, and pushed into the work. Mainly used in finishing a plain border,

DRAFTING.—The separation of a bundle of rods into various lengths. For large bundles a tub is used, but smaller quantities can be held in the crook of the left arm. All the butts must rest on the bottom of the tub

or floor, and the longest rods are grasped with the right hand by their tops, drawn out and laid aside, then the next longest, and so on, each handful being laid on top of the preceding one at right angles to it.

By this method the shortest rods can be used to begin the siding of a flowed basket, the longest rods being used for the top where the distance round is greater and the stakes farther apart.

FITCH.—A pair of rods used to form open-work, and worked in the reverse way to pairing.

FLOW.—The outward slope of the sides of a basket.

FOOT.—A piece of work, usually consisting of one or two rounds of waling and a border, added to the bottom of the basket.

HANDLE.—A term used in basketry in precisely the same way as it is generally used. The main kinds of handle are the Cross handle, and the small handle, either on the border or just below it.

HASP.—A twisted or plaited loop attached to the lid of a basket which fits over a noose on front of basket, the combination being used in conjunction with a peg or padlock to secure lid (see illustration of Southport basket.).

HINGE.—Formed of twisted rod or skein and used to attach lids to baskets or for wicker doors such as those of cat and dog travelling baskets.

HOOP.—Formed by coiling a rod upon itself and used for keeping stakes upright until upsett has been worked. Also applied to the rigid framework used in "hoop-and-Scallom" work.

LAPPING OR WRAPPING.—The transverse skein bind used to cover a handle-bow, frame or other part of a wicker article.

LEADER.—A whole rod or skein carried across a lapped handle or other lapped part and used to form a pattern.

LISTING.—A form of ornamentation applied to a lapped handle by working additional skeins round the leader or leaders.

NOOSE.—A twisted or plaited loop or staple worked on to the front of a basket under the top wale, and over which the hasp falls (see illustration of "Southport" basket).

PAIR.—Formed by working two rods alternately, the left-hand rod being taken over the right, behind the stake, and to the front again. The two rods used in fitching are worked so that they twist round each other in the reverse direction, this process when used in ordinary work being known as Reverse Pairing.

FRONT.—Where this term is used in the instructions it means that side of the work which faces worker.

PICKING.—Cutting off surplus ends. Is usually performed in one operation after a complete part such as a bottom, body or lid has been made.

PIECING.—Joining a new rod to the butt or top of one that has been worked to its end.

RANDING.—Working a single rod before and behind alternate stakes or bottom-sticks. A rand in the sides of the basket is the section of work formed when a number of randing-rods equal to the number of stakes has been used.

ROUND.—Applied to the sides of any basket without an opening, and to the lids and bottoms of round and oval baskets. A complete circuit of the piece of work, e.g., a round of waling, four rounds of upsetting.

SCALLOM.—A stake, or the equivalent of a bottom-stick or lid-stick which has been affixed by looping its thinned end round a hoop or the outside stick of a bottom.

SIDING.—Applied to any form of weaving used in buidling up the sides of a basket.

SLATH.—A round or oval bottom at the stage when the sticks have been opened out. The term includes the two processes of Tying-In and Opening-Out respectively.

SLEW.—Two, three, or more rods worked together, one above the other, alternately behind and before the stakes or bottom-sticks.

SLYPE.—The taper or point formed by two cuts at the end of a rod.

STAKES.—The rods which form the uprights in the sides of a basket.

STICKS.—Used for rods of any size which form the framework of a bottom or lid. In the case of willows as raw materials the term is used for the stoutest rods, generally topped and of two or three year's growth.

STROKE.—Any complete movement in basket-work, e.g., the working of a randing-rod behind a stake and to the front again. Also used to denote the piece of work resulting from such a movement. "Analogous to a stitch in needlework" (*Art of Basket-Making.*)

TOP.—The thin end of a willow rod.

UPSETT.—The rounds of waling put on immediately after the stakes have been turned up to "set up" the basket

WALE.—Three or more rods worked in a manner similar to pairing, the left-hand rod being taken each time, carried over the others, behind the stake, and to the front again.

METHODS OF WEAVING.

"And bending osiers into baskets weav'd."—*Dryden.*

The principal tools of the basket-maker are those with which nature has provided him, his hands—and of these the most important member, as Dr. Okey points out, is the left thumb. The main part of the work is done from left to right, the right hand manipulating the rod which is being worked, and the left hand following up with the thumb in front and the forefinger at the back or inside of basket. In the case of rectangular bottoms and lids and sometimes in the sides of baskets, e.g., baskets with hand holes and dog baskets which have an opening in side, work is done from right to left, in which case the positions of

the hands are reversed, so that it is really necessary to the complete mastery of the art to be ambidextrous in the practice of it.

Perhaps it will not be out of place to quote here from the introduction written by Dr. Okey for a small manual on cane work for children. " . . . Great care should be taken to impress on the children the importance of the correct use of the fingers, and especially of the thumbs, in working each stroke tightly into its proper place. The ultimate perfection of shape and symmetry of texture depend upon the more or less perfect conception of beautiful form in the mind of the little artist, and the power of the fingers to impress such form upon a recalcitrant material. Every stroke has a permanent effect on the ultimate form of the basket. No subsequent pressure will alter it. The result for good or ill is as irrevocable as are the results of good or bad actions in the moral world. It is impossible to mould afterwards into good form work that has been ill-shapen in any part of the weaving. . ."

This of course applies with equal force to adults and to willow work even more than cane work. The main difference between cane and willow is the tendency of the latter to "kink" i.e., to form an angle instead of a curve when bent. This is a valuable property in the willow making for tightness and resiliency in the finished basket, always providing that the kinks occur in the right places, usually immediately upon the stouter rod round which the other is being worked. Particular attention is drawn to the importance of placing the rod in position and holding it there hard up against the stick or stake while it is being brought to the front or taken through to the back as the case may be. It is incorrect to work the stroke loosely and then by pushing and pulling to attempt to tighten it afterwards, for it will have been kinked in the wrong place, and when a kink is once formed the rod loses for good its resiliency in the part that has been kinked.

It is proposed to deal now with all the forms of weaving used in fine willow work thus saving repetition in subsequent pages. The reader need not, however, attempt to master them as preliminary exercises, but can proceed at once to the construction of one of the simpler examples, referring back to this section for an explanation of the instructions.

Diagram 1. Randing.

Randing.—This is shown in diagram 1 and in the siding of the small blackberry basket on frontispiece, as well as in some of the other examples illustrated. The picnic basket on page 66 is close randed, the other examples being light randed. Light randing is that in which the rods just touch each other. They are not driven tightly down as in the close randing, but care must be taken to see that no gaps are left. A few light taps with iron for a little distance from the butt of each rod after working, will ensure this. Randing with willow in the case of bottoms and lids of rectangular baskets, and in sides where the randing

is turned back to form hand holes or an opening, is carried out in a similar way to that employed in using cane, a new butt being begun where the top of the previous rod finishes, both top and butt resting against one and the same stake on the inside or back of the work. But in the ordinary siding a different method is used. The rods are not worked continuously round and round the basket as with cane, but each new butt is laid in against the stake to the right of that against which the preceding butt was laid, and in randing with willow it is immaterial whether the number of stakes be odd or even. The work is

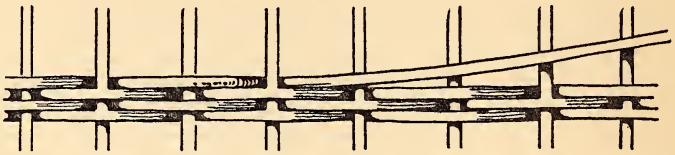


Diagram 1. RANDING.

begun by laying the butt of a randing-rod between two stakes so that it rests against the left hand one on the inside, about half-an-inch being left to be cut off later. The left thumb is now used to hold the rod in position against the front of the right-hand stake, and the rod is grasped by the right hand in a manner similar to that used in holding a pencil, and at a point about 2in. from the right-hand stake. Now, still retaining the pressure with the left thumb, lift the rod and pass it between the two stakes, pushing it round the back of the next stake with the right thumb, and catching it and bringing it to the front again on the other side of this stake with the forefinger. All randing, and slewing also, consists in a repetition of these movements, the basket being turned in the opposite direction as the work proceeds. The process will be by no means easy at the beginning, facility coming only with practice. Resist the temptation to rand the sides of a basket or a rectangular bottom or lid by the method used in pairing or randing an oval bottom, in which the rod is held by the right hand with back of hand uppermost and elbow up in the air, an incorrect and ungainly method when applied to ordinary randing.

The randing rod should not reach quite round the basket, and to ensure this in a flowed basket the drafting of the siding rods should be resorted to, the smallest rods being used first where the circumference of the basket is least. When the first rod has been worked to within an inch or so of its top, which is left outside, a second rod is laid in, not where the first finished, but in the next space to that in which the first butt was laid, or, in other words, the second butt will rest against the

next stake to the right of that against which the first butt rests, on the inside of basket as before. The top of the second rod will finish against the next stake to the right of that against which the top of the first rod finished, and so with each new rod. As the worker proceeds he will notice that the work is assuming a slanting form, and he may possibly think that he is going wrong. This is not so ; the slope is only temporary and when a complete rand has been worked the randing will be quite level. In larger baskets two rands may be worked simultaneously, being begun at opposite sides of the basket.

It should be particularly noticed that the stakes are to remain straight, the randing being bent to pass in and out of them. This applies also to other kinds of siding, It is rendered much easier if the stakes are at least double the size of the randing rods, and this proportion should be adhered to as closely as possible. For the same reason the stakes must be sound, as a split stake will not stand up against the pressure of the randing-rod. When getting out the set of stakes all splitty rods should be placed on one side for bottoming, or, if too bad, discarded altogether. The stakes must also be kept level with one another and not allowed to become corrugated. A further point is the keeping of the stakes at correct distances one from another. It will be seen, therefore, that close attention is required particularly in the early stages of training ; later much of the work is done subconsciously. The left thumb and forefinger will be continually in use, controlling the stake as the rod is worked upon it; this injunction applies to the other forms of weaving also.

Often it will happen that the sides of a basket cannot be completed with exactly one or more rands. For example, it may be found that when one-and-a-half rands have been put on the siding at its highest point is deep enough. In this case, and in all other cases where the unevenness of depth is such that it cannot be put right with the beating iron, the rule is used to test the depth to the right of the last butt laid in, and where the depth begins to fall below that required, a new butt is laid in. This is not worked out to its top (unless an extra short rod is used), but left when it reaches the point at which the work is again deep enough, or it may be turned round a stake there and worked back again. More rods are added if required, to bring the lower parts up to the correct depth, the iron being used in moderation to assist the levelling.

Close randing is worked in the same way as light randing, except that the iron is in continual use to close the work up quite tightly, Butler refers to "a basket hilt that would hold broth," and it is commonly supposed that close randed work can be made to hold water. Be this as it may, a piece of close randing certainly possesses remarkable strength and wear-resisting qualities. It is more difficult than light randing, but is rendered easier if the randing rods are proportionately

thinner, and the stakes set rather more closely together than in light randing, these details being in keeping with the better quality work which is being produced.

Prick randing is light or close randing with the butt of each randing rod slyped and inserted to the right of the stake instead of being simply laid in.

Rib Randing.—This is produced by carrying the randing-rod in front of two stakes instead of one as in ordinary randing. Each rod can be worked in this way throughout its whole length, passing alternately in front of two stakes and behind one, or a part only of each rod can be so worked, the remainder being worked out as ordinary randing. In the soiled linen basket shown on p. 69, a spiral rib is formed by taking the butt of each successive randing-rod in front of two stakes, behind one and in front of two again, and then working it out in the ordinary way. Ribbing can be produced on the inside of the basket also, by carrying the randing rod behind two stakes instead of one. Rib-randing can be either light or close, and the butts can be "pricked in" as in prick randing.

French Randing.—This is shown in the Bread or Fruit Basket, illustrated on page 66, and has a more pleasing and regular appearance than ordinary randing, but is more difficult, particularly as regards bringing the basket out to correct size. The method of starting the randing-rods is entirely different from that used in ordinary randing, all the butts being at the bottom of the rand (it is sometimes started with tops, but the principle employed is the same in both cases). This is accomplished by laying the first butt behind a stake and carrying it in front of the next and behind the next as in ordinary randing. The second butt is now laid in to the *left* of the first, worked one stroke, and then dropped like the first, and all the other butts are started in a similar way, each being worked one stroke and then dropped, the first one being lifted to allow the last one to be put in. The work is now continued by working a rod one (or two) strokes, dropping it, working the one on the left one stroke, dropping that, and so on, randing to the right, but working to the left in picking up each successive rod. This is continued until the tops of the rods have been worked out. If the depth of the particular basket will allow, a second French rand may be worked, or the remainder of sides completed with ordinary randing. It is more usual, however, not to mix the two kinds.

Pairing.—(See diagram 2.) This is used mainly in round and oval bottoms. It is not suitable for siding, but it is sometimes used in place of a top wale. Its use in bottoms will be dealt with later. Pairing is carried out by taking the left-hand rod of the two over the other, behind the stake, and to the front again, repeating this with each rod alternately.

Diagram 2. PAIRING.

SLEWING.—This consists in working two or more rods together one above the other, before and behind alternate stakes. A two-rod slew is shown in the siding of the oval garden basket illustrated on frontispiece, and a three-rod slew by diagram 3 and the reproduction of the oval buff shopping basket on frontispiece. Slews of four or more rods are used in the trade, but are rather too coarse for fine basket-work. Slewing is worked continuously round and round the sides of basket, and an odd number of stakes is necessary. Two-rod slewing is begun with a single rod in the same way as for randing, and when this rod has been worked for half its length, a second rod is laid in above it, and the two worked together. When the lower rod runs out, its top is left on the outside of the basket, and a third butt is laid in above the other rod,

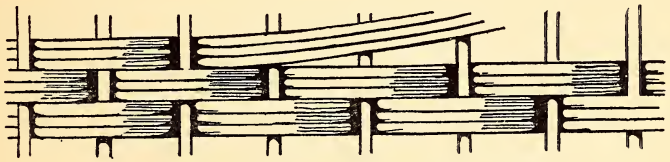


Diagram 3. SLEWING (THREE-ROD).

between the same two stakes, to make up the two again. In a similar way a fourth butt is laid in when the second runs out, and so on. Three-rod slewing is begun in the same way, but a second butt is added when about one-third of the first rod has been worked, and a third rod when about two-thirds of the first has been worked. This gives the three rods, and the number is maintained by adding a butt above the others when a top finishes below.

FRENCH SLEWING.—Shown in round buff shopping basket on page 68. Either two or three rods may be used together as in ordinary slewing, these being worked in the same way as French randing, except that two or three rods are treated as one in the working.

In any form of slewing, rods somewhat thinner in proportion to the stakes, than those used for randing, are desirable, as the pressure on the stakes of two or three rods is naturally greater than that of one rod, if sizes are equal. Slewed work is made to touch only, as in light randing, and never closed.

Diagram 4. THREE-ROD WALE.

WALING.—Three-rod waling is shown in diagram 4, and four-rod waling in diagram 5, and the former occurs in most of the examples illustrated. Five-rod and six-rod waling are occasionally used. Waling is worked on the same principle as pairing, and is always begun (except sometimes in the first round of upsetting) with tops. It should always finish with the tops also, as to finish with butts would be likely to leave an unsightly gap. To begin a wale in the sides of basket, lay in the required number of rods in adjoining spaces, take the left-hand rod, carry it over the others, behind the stake against the front of which the right-hand rod lies, and out to the front again. This stroke is repeated throughout the waling, taking the left-hand rod each time. When the butts of the rods have been reached, new butts are inserted close alongside the old ones, the latter being left on outside and the new ones on inside of work.

Wale-rods may be nearly as stout as the stakes. The wale can be produced on inside of basket by taking each rod in front of one stake and behind the next two (or three if a four-rod wale) or with four rods

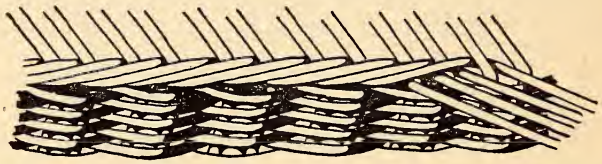


Diagram 5. FOUR-ROD WALING USED AS FIRST ROUND OF UPSETTING.

the wale can be produced both inside and outside the basket by taking each rod in front of two stakes and behind the next two.

UPSETTING.—This consists of a number of rounds of waling, but is called upsetting by reason of its position at the bottom of the sides where it is used to "set up" the stakes. The number of rounds of upsetting depends on the depth and quality of the basket, but should never be less than two, and seldom less than three in fine basketry. It will be found easier to begin the upsetting with tops although a stronger edge for the basket to stand upon results from starting with butts. In either case the ends are not laid in, but slyped and pushed into the bottom by the sides of three or four adjoining stakes. The first round of upsetting on larger baskets is usually a four-rod one, one rod being dropped on the completion of the first round, and the remainder

of upsett worked with three rods. No piecing should be done in the first round, and if the rods are not long enough to go right round the basket with a little to spare, it is advisable to begin two sets of wale-rods on opposite sides of the basket. If started with butts, one set of tops may be dropped and three more tops pieced to the other three by being pushed through alongside them. When the butts are reached three more butts would be pieced in and worked out to their tops. Or if the upsett is begun with two sets of tops, then two sets of butts must be pieced in when the butts are reached. On the completion of the upsett it should be well closed down with the iron before the siding is begun. The tendency in upsetting is to allow the work to splay out too much, and it is in the second round that this tendency is most apparent. The reason for this is that the first round is worked well in between the stakes and the ends of the bottom sticks so that it takes up a diagonal position in the angle formed by bottom and sides of basket, and exerts a pull outwards against the stakes. In all cases, therefore, the second round should be worked more inwards than would appear to be necessary in any given basket. In a basket with upright sides, the second round of the upsett must be used to force the stakes inwards, otherwise the upsett will bulge. In flowed baskets the completed upsett should leave the stakes rather more upright than is actually required. The subsequent siding will always bring the basket out to a greater size at top than would be anticipated. The hoop should not be relied on to counteract this tendency. Its office is simply to hold the stakes temporarily, and it should be removed at the earliest possible moment. Nor is the practice of tying the stakes together in a bunch in order to secure curved or barrelled sides to be recommended. The stakes should in every case be absolutely free at the earliest possible moment, and the expert can then bring them out or in, either at an angle or in a graceful curve, solely by attention to each stroke in the siding, controlling the stake *as the rod is being worked* by means of the left thumb and forefinger. At the same time, however, each stake should be straightened or curved as required, by bending it with the hand, the idea being to make the skeleton or framework of the basket assume as early as possible its ultimate form

Fitching.—This is the term for openwork in basketry, and is accomplished by working two rods as a fitch to secure the stakes in position above the open part. The fitch itself is essentially the same in all cases, but many different designs can be produced in the openwork by changing the number and positions of the stakes and bye-stakes, and by varying the manner in which they are crossed. The two main kinds of fitching are straight Fitching (diagram 7) and cross fitching. Diagram 6 illustrates a pleasing combination of straight fitching and cross fitching. The fitch is usually begun by placing the tops of two rods of equal size and length, together and looping them over a stake as shown

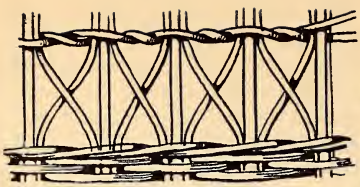


Diagram 6.

FITCHING.

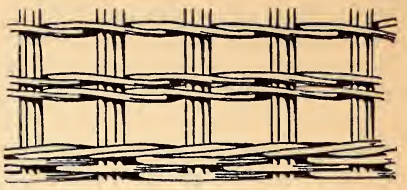


Diagram 7.

in diagram 8. In working the fitch, the rod farthest from the worker is grasped with the right hand and brought over the other rod towards him, this other rod being held between the forefinger and thumb of the left hand, the palm of the hand uppermost, the rods changing from hand to hand after each stroke. The fitch rods should be kept as nearly as possible level, the stakes being brought into position between the two rods with the right hand. Fitching proper should not be attempted by the worker until he has had some experience of other forms of weaving, but the kind of fitching shown in diagram 6 can be introduced into the siding of a randed or slewed basket without much difficulty. The fitch shown in diagram 6 is that known as a Jack Fitch, in which a double turn is taken between each two stakes. The question as to whether this is necessary depends entirely on the thickness of the fitch-rods and the distance apart of the stakes. The size of the fitch-rods is generally a little less than the size of the stakes, but the distance apart of the stakes varies not only as between one basket and another, but also in the top and bottom of the same basket. When the butts of the first two fitch-rods have been reached, two more butts are pieced in in the manner shown in diagram 9, the old butt being pulled well to the left as the other is brought down into position. In a Jack Fitch a single turn is taken when piecing in a new rod. When one round of fitching is completed the two rods may be worked out as a pair, or they may be converted into a wale by the addition of a third rod.

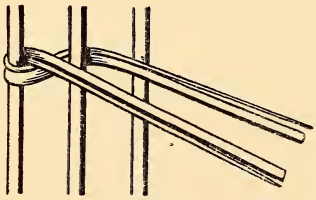


Diagram 8.

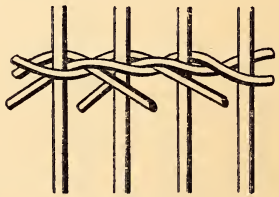


Diagram 9.

BORDERS AND HANDLES.

BORDERS.—The main kinds of borders are the Track or Trac, the Plain, the Plait, and the Rope. Many kinds of borders have been

introduced into cane work, and have been provided with names to suit the fancies of the originators, but they will be found on analysis to be variations and combinations of these four. The Scallop or Open-work border may, perhaps, be regarded as a fifth type, but has not been included here, for, in the opinion of the writer, it is "pretty" rather than artistic. Moreover, it takes time and care (particularly in willow, which is less suitable for this type of border than cane) which could, it is thought, be better expended in the production of something more fitted to a border. An important point to notice is that a border must be strong enough to withstand wear. A glance at any book on cane-work will quickly show how this border is done, for it is quite simple in construction.

Diagram 10. Simple Track Border.

Track Borders.—A great many variations are possible in this type of border, one of its simplest forms being shown in diagram 10. This border was used for the little blackberry basket illustrated on frontis-piece, and is begun by kinking two stakes about a quarter-of-an-inch above the waling, bringing the first down behind the second, in front of the next two, and leaving it behind the fifth. This is repeated with each stake in succession, the last one or two being threaded into position to correspond with the remainder. From this it will be seen that in the track border each stake is brought down in turn, worked for the requisite number of strokes, and then finished with in one operation ; whereas in the other kinds of border each stake is picked up more than once before its work is completed.

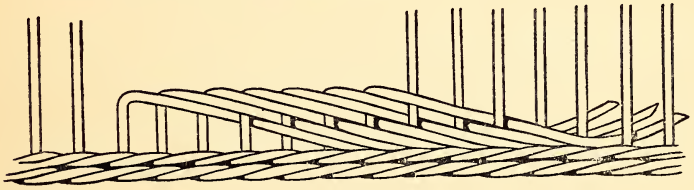


Diagram 11. Another Track Border.

Diagram 11 shows a track border somewhat more complex than the foregoing. In this instance each stake is taken in front of the next two, behind one, and in front of two again, the end being left inside as before. In working track borders in which the end is left inside, it is a good

plan to cut off each end as it is finished with, care being taken to leave it just long enough to rest against the stake. In beginning this border, five or six stakes should be kinked down at the correct height, this being estimated according to the thickness of the stakes. When the border is well begun the remaining stakes are kinked over the preceding stroke, each stake being given a half turn or twist so as to prevent it cracking. The kinking of the first few stakes is accomplished by inserting the point of the hand-knife about halfway into the stake and giving the knife a half turn as the stake is brought down. The track border shown in diagram 11 was used in the round shopping basket illustrated on page 68.

Diagram 12 shows the track border in diagram 10 worked with doubled stakes. Any kind of track border can be similarly treated, all the stakes being previously doubled by inserting a rod of about the same size by the side of each.

Diagram 12. Track Border with Double Stakes.

Plain Borders.—These comprise the Two-Rod, Three-Rod, Four-Rod, and Five-Rod, a Six-Rod being used occasionally. In each case the stake can be brought down behind either one stake or two stakes, the resulting borders sometimes being called single and double respectively. The two forms can best be distinguished, however, by adding "behind-one" or "behind-two" as the case may be, e.g., a "four-rod-behind-two" border. "Pair" is sometimes used instead of "rod," e.g., "a four-pair border." The only practical difference between the working of "behind-one" and "behind-two" borders lies in the initial bringing down of the stakes. For example, the "three-rod behind-one" border shown in diagram 13 and in the oval garden basket illustrated on frontispiece, would have been a "three-rod-behind-two" border if the first three stakes had each been brought down behind the next *two* stakes instead of the next *one*. Conversely, the "four-rod-behind-two" border shown in diagram 14 and used in the close-randed picnic basket illustrated on page 66, would have been a "four-rod-behind-one" border if the beginning had been arranged so that the first four stakes came down behind *one* stake instead of behind *two*.

Two-Rod Plain Border.—This has been applied to the ends of the picnic basket lid shown on page 66, for which purpose it is very suitable; but it is not often used to border off the sides of a basket

unless it is a very small one. In the case of a basket, it is begun by bringing down any two stakes each behind the next one or two stakes. Calling these stakes Nos. 1 and 2 respectively, and the next ones on their right Nos. 3, 4 and 5, and assuming that a "behind-one-" border is to be worked, proceed as follows : Carry No. 1 in front of No. 3, behind No. 4, and to the front. Then bring down No. 3 (first giving it a half turn or twist and bringing it forward to get a good kink) behind No. 4 and to the front, side by side and close to No. 1. Now take No. 2 in front of No. 4, behind No. 5, and to the front, and bring down No. 4 alongside it. This gives two pairs, and the border is continued by taking the right-hand rod of the left-hand pair each time and working it as described for the first two rods. The left-hand rod of each pair is left to be cut off later, its work having been completed. When the work reaches the starting point, and only one stake is left standing, proceed as follows : Bring the right-hand rod of the left-hand pair in front of this stake and thread it through to the front under the kink of No. 1 stake. Then bring down the upstanding stake and thread it through the same place so that it lies alongside and to the right of the first rod. This gives two pairs once again. Take the right-hand rod of the left-hand pair in front of the stake against which it rests and kink it at right angles at a point just to the left of the next stake, slype the rod about an inch from the kink, and insert the slype down into the basket to the left of the stake, driving it down with a light tap or two with the iron. The right-hand rod of the remaining pair is crammed off in a similar manner to the left of the next stake, thus completing the border by the method known as "cramming off" to distinguish it from "drawing off," the method used with the more pliable cane which is drawn through to its appropriate places. The student is recommended to work this two-rod border on a small basket before proceeding to the other plain borders ; underlying principle is the same for all, and if the two-rod border is mastered the others will present little or no difficulty.

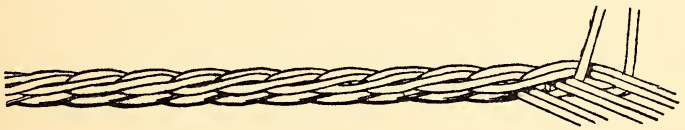


Diagram 13. Three-Rod-Behind-One Plain Border.

Three-Rod Border.—This is begun by bringing down three stakes either behind the next one or the next two stakes. Diagram 13 shows a three-rod border in which the stakes are brought down behind one stake. The manner of working this border is the same as the two-rod, except that each stroke in front is longer, and there is an additional cram at the finish. The right-hand rod of the left-hand pair is taken each time, the other rod being left as before.

In a round basket the border can be begun anywhere except when some form of fastening or design has been worked into the front of the basket. If a lid is to be provided the border will be begun at the opposite side or at the back ; or at one side if the basket is intended to have two small handles on the border. In oval and rectangular work, and indeed in all cases where something is to be added to the border, it should be begun at a place which will later be partly covered by the handle, hinges, or whatever else is added.

Diagram 14. Four-Rod-Behind-Two Plain Border.

Four-Rod and Five-Rod Borders.—Four-rod borders are shown in diagram 14 and in the round white bread basket, page 66, and the picnic basket, page 66. Five-rod borders have been worked on the soiled linen basket, page 69, and the cycle basket, page 68. If the two-rod and three-rod borders are mastered, and a little thought is given to the small modifications made necessary by the increased number of rods in use, no difficulty will be experienced in these, either behind-one or behind-two. In these borders, and to a lesser degree in the three-rod, the first strokes should not be worked tightly, but looped out somewhat to leave room for the finishing crams. Both behind-one and behind-two borders have been worked in the examples illustrated.

Plait Border —The accompanying diagrams clearly show how one of the simpler forms of plait border is accomplished, this border being used for the oblong buff work basket shown on page 67. Plait borders can be varied by having three rods together instead of two by increasing the number of pairs, or threes, used, and by varying the relative number of stakes before and behind which the pair (or three) passes, e.g., in a simple three-pair plait the pairs can be worked as in the diagrams or can be made to pass in front of one stake instead of two, and behind two stakes instead of one. This illustrates how borders with a greater number of pairs can be varied, and is not recommended for use as a practical border.

For the border illustrated, two short butts are used as temporary pegs, one of which is placed between two stakes with its inner end pointing to the right. Bring the stake down over it to the front and by the side of this stake lay a rod of about the same size with a portion of the butt end projecting on the inside of the work. Now insert the second peg in the next space, bring down number two stake over it and add a second rod as before. Of the two pairs thus formed take the left-

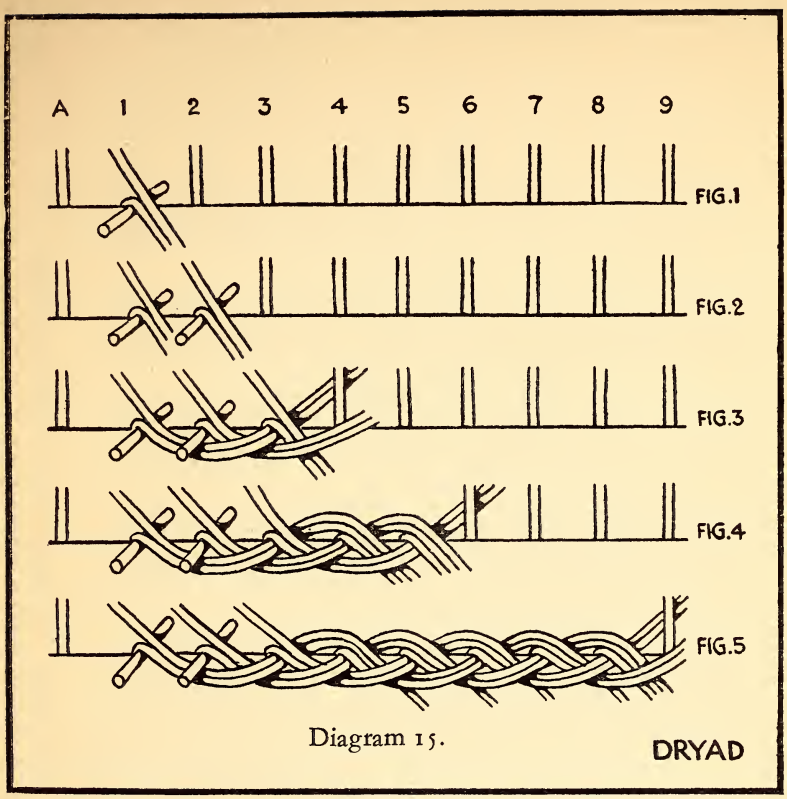


Diagram 15.

hand one over the other, in front of number three stake and leave it on the inside. Bring down number three stake to the front and add a rod as was done in the case of the other two stakes which provide the three pairs necessary for the border, two being now at the front and one at the back. The remainder of the border is a repetition of the following strokes : Take the left-hand pair of the two in front over the right-hand pair, in front of the first upright stake, and to the inside, leaving it there. Bring down the stake over this pair to the front and then take the left-hand pair of the two at the back and bring it to the front on the right of the stake just laid down, and side by side with it. The *right-hand* rod of the three is now finished with, the two on the left of it being taken in turn. This, it should be noted, is the reverse to the method adopted in a plain border where the left-hand rod is dropped each time.

To finish the border remove the pegs and thread the two pairs in

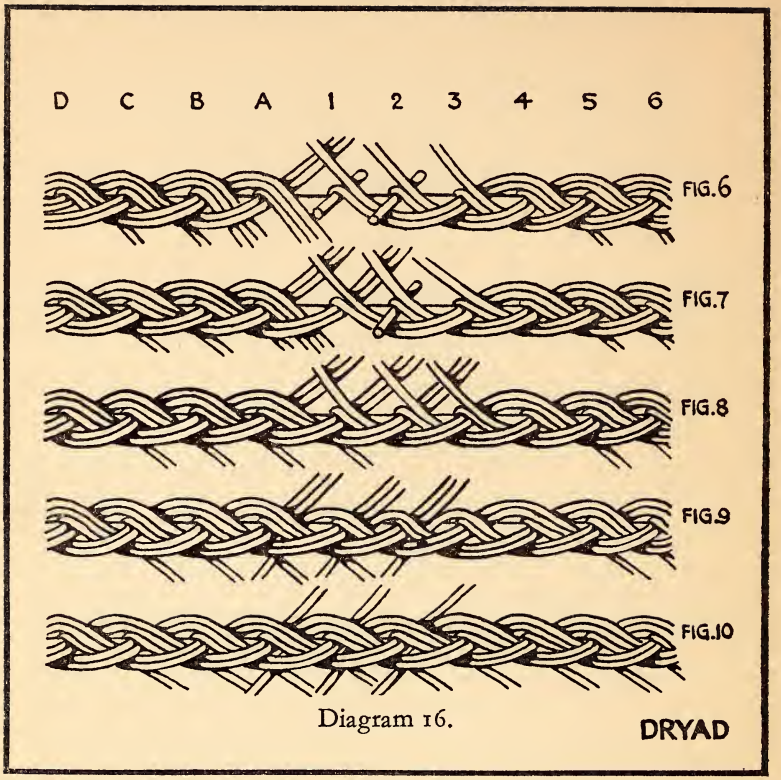


Diagram 16.

front through to the back in their proper positions to correspond with the remainder as shown in Fig. 8. The butts of the extra rods are now threaded through to the front as shown in Fig. 9, and the border completed by threading the right-hand rod of each pair through to the front as shown in Fig. 10. Another and more general method of beginning a plait border in willow is to double the first three stakes by pushing down a rod by the side of each instead of laying it there. The border is then proceeded with in the same manner until the position corresponding to Fig. 8 is reached, the three pairs being on the inside or back of the border. These are then taken in turn and threaded through to the front alongside the three pairs formed by doubling the stakes at the beginning. The objection to this method is that it gives an additional rod in the width of the border, making it wider at this spot than elsewhere.

The Rope Border.—This is simple in construction, and the only

variation is obtained by inserting more extra rods at the beginning which give a thicker twist. The simplest and smallest rope border is shown on the oval shopping basket illustrated on frontispiece and this is begun by inserting an extra rod by the side of two adjoining stakes. The two rods forming the left-hand pair are then brought down to the front, twisted upon themselves in the reverse direction to that employed in turning home a screw, and taken through to the inside between the upstanding pair and the first single stake where they are left for the time being. The other pair is now treated in a similar manner, being taken through between the first and second single stakes and left on the inside The left-hand pair is then brought to the front on the right of the first upright stake, which is brought down and twisted with them, the three-rod twist being taken through to the back as before. The other pair is treated in similar fashion so that there are two threes at the back. The shortest rod of each three is thenceforth dropped, the remaining two being brought forward and twisted with the stake to form another three, the whole of the border being simply a repetition of the foregoing strokes. On arriving at the starting point, a neat finish is made by threading the last pair through under the first doubled stake, and then threading one rod of each of the two threes into position in the double twists with which the border was begun.

A method of combining the plain and track borders is shown on the tray illustrated on frontispiece. The "four-rod-behind-one" border was worked in the ordinary way except that instead of being crammed off the last strokes were drawn through. The ends were then worked to form a simple track, each rod being brought out at right angles to the border, taken over the next two, under the next, over the next, and its end left underneath.

Handles.—These are of two main kinds—Cross Handles and Small Handles—a sub-division being roped and lapped. Lapped handles are treated of in the section devoted to skein work. Roped Cross handles may be either whole-rod or twisted-rod.

Twisted-Rod Cross Handles.—A handle of this description will be seen on the blackberry basket illustrated on frontispiece. Twisted-rod handles are stronger and more wear-resisting than whole-rod handles, but have not such a neat and regular appearance. This is due to the disparity in thickness of the butt and top ends of the rods, each of which does two journeys across the bow, whereas in the whole-rod handle each rod goes across once only. In cross handles a bow of stout willow rod is first placed across the basket by inserting its slyped ends at either side or at either end. If a very stout bow is used, or two or three bows placed side by side, "bow-marks" are left in the sides of the basket by treating two stakes as one in the siding and pieces of rod are inserted temporarily to keep the two stakes apart. The left -hand stake of each two is not bordered down like the remainder, but is passed by

when the border is worked and cut off later. "Bow-marks" were made in the oval buff shopping basket shown on frontispiece. The usual method of inserting the bow is to slype and insert the thicker end first, then bend the bow to the required curve with the right hand followed up by the left, and, judging the length by placing the other end in position on outside of basket, slype the bow accordingly, and push it down into basket. But if several baskets of the same kind are being made it is a good plan to turn all the bows at once independently of the baskets, hold each by tying a string or twisted rod across its ends, and hang the whole up till required. As they dry they become set in position and lose their spring, and are in consequence less liable to pull the basket out of shape.

Having inserted the bow, select four sound rods free from side shoots, and long enough to go twice across bow with a little to spare, and push their slyped butts down alongside the bow, to its left and close to it, two on either side of basket. The front rod of one of the pairs is now twisted throughout its length. The twisting of a rod is quite a little art in itself and some practice will be necessary before proficiency is attained. Twisting is begun at the top of a rod, the basket being held meanwhile between the feet or knees to prevent it turning round. The twisting is in a clockwise direction and is begun with the forefinger and thumb of the right hand, the left hand holding the rod a little lower down. If the rod is very small, twisting can be continued right down to the butt by this method, but in the case of a larger rod it is necessary, in order to obtain a better purchase, to form the twisted top into a sort of crank and turn it as one would the handle of a gramophone. In either case after twisting an inch or two the hands are moved lower down the rod, the twisted part being allowed to untwist again temporarily. When the rod is being worked, the part of it required for the stroke in hand is retwisted before being worked. Having twisted the first of the four rods right down to its butt, coil it four or five times round the bow, then take it through under the border from the outside and on the left of the bow, on the opposite side of the basket. This rod is left for the time being and one from this side of the basket is twisted and taken over to the other side in a similar way, keeping each stroke close to the corresponding one of the first rod. The other two rods are similarly dealt with in turn, and then each of them is taken across the bow again, threaded through the opening just above the border, cut off, or to give a neater finish they may be taken through under the border and worked along the side for one or two strokes.

Whole-Rod Cross Handle.—This is shown on the round shopping basket illustrated on page 68, and is worked as follows : Select six or eight rods according to the size of the handle and rods, long enough to go once across the bow with six or eight inches to spare, and insert

three or four close against the bow, beginning on its left with the first rod and adding the others in the direction of the inside of the basket close to each other and also to the bow. Do the same with the other three or four rods at the other side, and then, taking one set at a time, (or if this be found too difficult, one rod at a time), coil them four or five times round the bow, keeping each set of rods together. To finish the handle the rods of each set are cut off level near their tops and taken in turn through under the border to the inside on the left of the bow, round over the top of the border on the same side, and then through under the border on the right, where they are twisted together and threaded along under the border for one or two strokes.

Twisted Single-Rod Small Handle.—Small handles can be placed either on the border or below it. Small handles below the border are put on before the border is laid down, and are, with slight modifications, constructed in the same way as the handles on the border about to be described, the main difference being that the handle under the border is at right angles to the side of the basket, whereas the handle on the border is almost upright. A handle of this type is shown in the picnic basket, page 66. For a single-rod handle, a rod long enough to go three times across the handle is slyped and pushed into the border at the point which will be the left side of the handle, with that side of the basket on which the handle is to be put, farthest from worker. Or the handle can be worked with the side on which it is to be put close to the worker in which case the rod will be inserted on the right and all the strokes worked in the reverse direction. Handles below the border are always worked in this way, but the former method is recommended for handles above the border. After being inserted the rod is twisted and taken through under the border from the outside at the place where the right-hand side of the handle is to be, the loop thus formed being large enough to accommodate the hand comfortably. The rod is now corded three or four times round the loop and taken through under the border from the outside on the left-hand side of handle, then corded back again, drawn through just above border and cut off or worked along under border for a stroke or two. The term "corded" is used in cases such as the present where two or more strands are twisted upon each other to form a regular twist without a bow. "Roped" is used where the strands are twined round a rigid bow.

Twisted Double-Rod Small Handle.—For this type of handle, which is shown on the round white bread basket illustrated on page 66, two rods are used, one being inserted on the left and the other on the right. The left-hand rod is taken over to the right and through under the border as before, but without being twisted, as it is the function of this stroke to form a rigid bow round which the succeeding strokes are roped. The right-hand rod is now twisted and taken three times round the other, then taken through from the outside and worked back again,

to be taken through under the border immediately to the left of the bow-rod. The latter is now twisted, worked across to the left, taken under the border on the left of the other rod, worked across to the right again and drawn through just above the border. The other rod, which was temporarily dropped, is now worked across to the left and drawn through just above the border also. If there are gaps in the handle, one or both of these ends may be worked across to opposite side where they are again taken through just above the border and cut off; or through under the border and worked along the side for one or two strokes.

One or two other kinds of handles are occasionally met with, such as the rope handle which is similar to a rope border, and the plaited handle worked either with three or more pairs of rods, or nine or more single rods. The drop handle consists of a rigid D-shaped bow lapped with skeins, and attached to the basket by two loose hinges.

SKEIN WORK.

Skeins, which are thin strips of split willow, are easy to work, and their use in combination with whole rods is to be recommended to the beginner, particularly one whose hands are not hard enough and strong enough to stand the strain of working whole rods throughout. Even when proficiency has been attained and the hands have become stronger and harder as the result of use, skeins will still retain their proper, though subordinate, place in the general scheme, and they can be employed to a relatively greater extent by those whose hands never harden or become strong, and by those who for any reason do not thoroughly master the making of baskets entirely with rods.

Skeins, either white or buff (brown is not used for this purpose as the outer skin peels off both in the making and in the using of brown skeins), can be bought ready-made, or may be made by the worker. The operation of skein-making is not a particularly easy one, but difficulties are reduced to a minimum if suitable rods are used, and also if the shave is properly ground and has its edge set at the right angle. Rods for skein-making should not be less than five feet long, free from side shoots, scabs, or "bubbles," straight grained, and not brittle. These qualities, among others, should, of course, be possessed by all rods, but they are absolutely indispensable for easy skein-making. For making skeins the rods are used dry, but if the available rods are not quite all that they should be, a short period of soaking and mellowing under a cloth for an hour is advisable.

Cleaving.—This is begun at the top of the rod, about six inches of which is cut off first. Cuts are then made with the hand-knife to accommodate the cleave which is pressed along the rod with the right hand, spaces being left between the fingers to allow the clefts to pass. The

rod is held a little lower down by the left hand which is moved downwards as the cleaving proceeds. The process is one of rending or splitting, not cutting, and the cleave must be guided aright to ensure this being done evenly. The principle to be observed is to exert extra pressure against the cleft which shows signs of becoming larger than the others ; this will result in reducing its size and making the three equal again.

SHAVING.—The ordinary method is to sit with the shave grasped in the left hand resting against the left knee and to draw the clefts through the shave with the right hand ; the left thumb (protected by a thumb-stall) holding the cleft down on the far side of the cuttingedge. This time-honoured method is quite satisfactory except for the strain imposed on the left arm and left knee, and the alternative of fixing the shave to table top is suggested as a practical proposition which has been adopted by many workers. This can be accomplished by means of two small angle-irons screwed to table top and right-hand side of the shave, which must have its left side flush with the edge of the table and its rear overlapping the table so that the thumb-screw can be manipulated. To make room for fixing the shave in this manner, one of the wooden fences at the end of the table would be about nine inches short of the table corner at the left end of the fence, and the shave would be fixed in line with the long side of the table at this corner. The clefts are drawn through the shave, pith side uppermost, in two movements ; first grasping the cleft at about its centre and drawing the butt end through the shave and then reversing the cleft and drawing through the other part holding the butt end which has already been shaved. For ordinary purposes each cleft will be drawn through the shave twice, the latter being screwed up tighter for the second drawing through ; but if very thin skeins are required, or the clefts are extra thick three or four times may be necessary. To save time all the clefts should be drawn through before the shave is altered.

UPRIGHTING.—For most skein work the skeins can be used after being shaved, but for listing and extra fine skein work of other kinds they are made uniform in width and as narrow as required by being drawn through the upright. The two cutting edges of this tool must be carefully set at exactly the same angle ; and the skein, which is drawn through with the right hand and held down with the left thumb as in shaving, must be carefully guided. In this case it is the skin side of the skein which is uppermost. The top of the skein is placed between the knives, and the uprighting is completed in one operation by drawing it through to the butt. References to the butt or top of a skein in the following pages do not, of course, apply to skeins which have been uprighted, as both ends of these are alike.

Skein work proper is of two kinds, Flat-skein work and Edge-skein work. The former used to be largely practised in this country, but has

now died out owing to competition from the Continent. A good example is the French plate basket, thousands of which are sold in this country every year. If one of these baskets be examined it will be seen that the skeins lie flat against each other, a method of working which takes considerable time and one which is therefore economically possible only where cheap labour is available. Apart from its use for forming the slaths of round and oval bottoms and lids, the worker will be well advised not to practise flat-skein work except perhaps for occasional and special jobs.

Skein Slath for Round Bottom or Lid.—We now begin actual working instructions, and the student will get best results by studying them with the work in hand ; indeed, a great part of them will simply bewilder him unless he does this. Another aid to the understanding of these written directions (which are necessarily very much less effective than oral tuition) is to examine every specimen of basketry that one comes across ; the household clothes basket, for example, is a splendid elementary object lesson in the art of basket-making on traditional lines. Having watered some material suitable for a small round practice basket and made some skeins (skeins can be used if desired for the slaths of the bottoms of the small examples described later instead of whole rods), cut six bottom-sticks from the butt ends of six of the stouter rods, two inches longer than the diameter of the bottom it is proposed to make. Pierce three of these in their centres with the bodkin or knife and thread the other three through them to form a cross as shown in diagram 18. Now insert the top of a skein in the split to the left of one of the threes, pass it in front of this three, behind the next three, in front of the next, and behind the next. The skein is now taken diagonally across from corner to corner in front and again at the back, returning to the point from which the diagonal strokes started. It is now taken to the left over the first three, behind the next three, and in front of the next three. Another diagonal is then formed at right angles to the first by carrying the skein over to the opposite corner, then across again at the back forming another diagonal, again at right angles to the previous one. The "tying-in" part of the slath is completed by taking the skein behind the three to its left which gives a cross within a square both in front and at the back (see diagram 17). All round and oval bottoms are made slightly convex or saucer-shaped so that the sticks in the present bottom will be curved somewhat towards the worker as the work proceeds, that side of the bottom which is now towards the worker being underneath in the finished basket. The side which is away from the worker is the "right" side of the bottom, and on this side the ribbing which is now to be worked will appear.

The next stage of the work is the "opening out" of the sticks, which, in the present bottom, is begun by taking the skein through to the back

on the right of the left-hand stick of the first three, this stick being pulled to the left away from the other two. The skein now goes behind the next two sticks and to the front again, being made to lie as flatly as possible, and the other three groups of three are opened out in the same way into ones and twos. Before proceeding to the second round, it is necessary with the present number of sticks (but not with all numbers), to pass the skein in front of two sticks, once only, so that in the next round each stroke will pass behind a different two sticks, thus opening out all the sticks singly and forming ribbing on the "right" side of the bottom. As each round is completed the skein is taken in front of two sticks once, the remainder of the work being a repetition of the "in front of one and behind two" stroke. Diagram 17 shows the reversed slath (worked loosely for the sake of clearness) when all the sticks have been opened out, after which the skein ribbing can be continued for part or the whole of the remainder of bottom or lid, or a pair of rods can have their tops inserted to the left of two adjoining stakes and the bottom or lid completed with pairing. In piecing in additional rods or skeins in a round or oval bottom, the method shown in diagram 19 is recommended, butts being pieced to butts, and tops to tops. In the case of pairing, the two butts or tops will be pieced in adjoining spaces. Instead of completing the bottom or lid with pairing or flat-skein work, it can be done with skeins worked edge to edge as in siding, these being worked either as ordinary randing or to form ribbing as at the beginning.

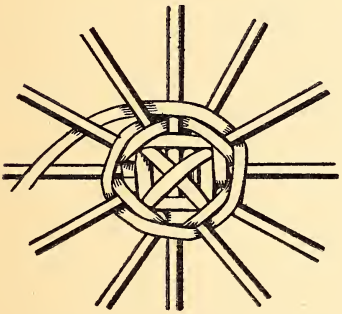


Diagram 17.

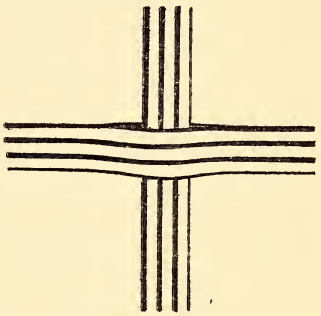


Diagram 18.

Oval bottoms or lids can also be "tied in" and "opened out" with skeins in a similar way to that just described for round bottoms or lids. The method of setting out the bottom sticks is given in the instructions relating to the oval garden basket, see frontispiece.

Edge Skein Work.—This is shown in the siding of the baby's or work-basket, illustrated on page 67, and, as the name implies, consists

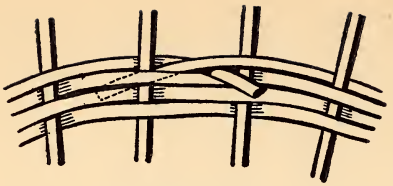
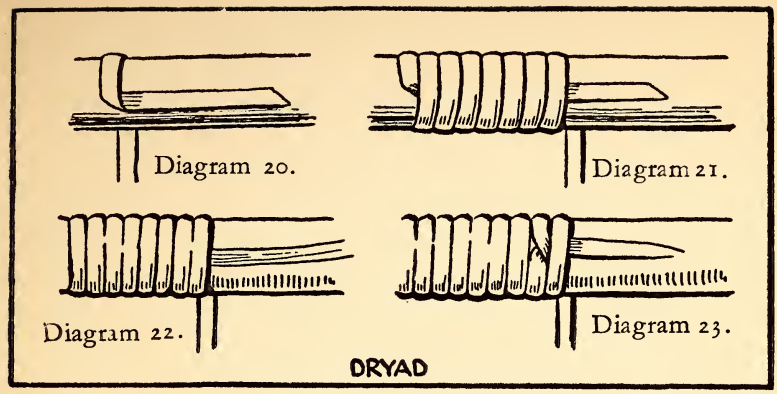


Diagram 19.

in working the skeins edge to edge thus getting over the ground much more quickly and using much less material, although, of course, the work is inferior in quality to the flat-skein work. In piecing in a new skein, its end and the end of the old skein are worked together for two strokes, the new end lying flat against the other, and in front of it so that the two occupy no more space vertically than does one skein. The end of the new skein will be left on the front of the work and the old end at the back, both being cut off close when the basket is picked. Baskets sided with skeins worked edge to edge do not present a good inside appearance, so that this method is best suited to lined baskets or those in which the inside is not exposed to view.

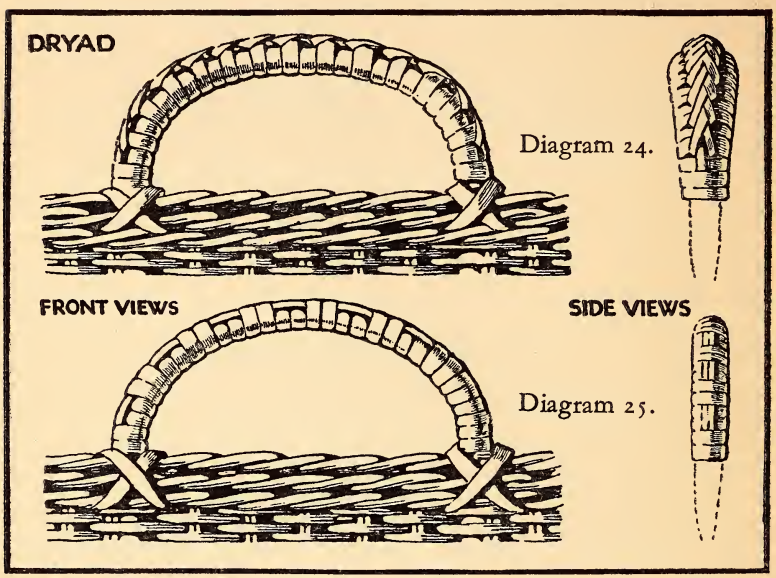
Skein Lapping or Wrapping.—Lapping is one of the principal ways in which skeins are used, their flatness and thinness making them very suitable for this purpose, the thinner the skein the more easy the work. Lapping is used for covering legs and other parts of wicker furniture, for hasps, nooses, and bars on picnic baskets, and for handles as described below. Lapping on frames (see page 63) is begun as shown in diagram 20, a quarter-of-an-inch or half-inch fine nail being used to secure the skein just under the bend. Lapping is done from left to right, the skein passing over the top of the frame away from the worker, the right hand being used to manipulate the skein while the left thumb and forefinger hold each stroke as it is completed. Diagram 21 shows the end being bound in with the lapping, and diagrams 22 and 23 show the method of piecing in a new skein, which is accomplished as follows. When about eight inches of the old skein remains place the new end along the frame cut side outwards, and proceed to wrap this in until about two inches only of the old skein remains. Holding this in the right hand and the new skein in the left, turn the two skeins so that the new one comes over the old and in position to continue the lapping, and the old end lies along the frame, cut side outwards, to be covered when the lapping is continued. To finish off, the end is passed under the last lap and drawn tight, a nail is inserted where the two parts cross, and the end is cut off close. Beginnings and endings should be made as far as possible in places where they will be least noticeable, such as on the inside of the lower and upper ends of legs. All joins should come on the inside of the work. Lapping with skeins is performed in precisely the same way as with centre lapping cane, and for fuller information on the subject the reader is referred to the excellent book "Cane Work on Simple Frames," by Charles Crampton



(Dryad Press). Leaders, as described below, can be introduced into any lapping.

Skein Handles.—All skein handles have a bow or bows, the lapping being done in the manner described above except for the beginnings and endings. It is usual to have at least two bows side by side for a lapped cross handle, and three side by side are often used, either of equal size or having one extra stout one in the centre and two thinner ones on either side. This is very suitable for listed handles. A single bow is sufficient for small lapped handles. If two bows are used they will be inserted with one thin and one thick end on either side. The two or three bows can be inserted into the border apart from one another and the lapping begun and finished at a point some distance above the border, as shown in diagrams 22 and 23, page 57 "Cane Work," by C. Crampton. In this type of handle the beginning and finishing are carried out as follows : To begin, pass the butt of a skein up between the bows from underneath at the point where it is proposed to begin the lapping. Now lap twice round the bows without including the butt, and then bring the butt down over these two laps with its right side uppermost and proceed to lap over it. When the finishing point has been reached, point the skein with a long taper, bring it up between the bows from the underside, and then pass it through a hole previously made with the bodkin between the second and third laps so that both sides of the handle will be alike. The hole should slant towards the other side of the basket and come out between two laps on the underside. When the skein has been drawn through, it is cut off close. To begin a lapped handle in which the bows are close together (see illustration of oval shopping basket, frontispiece), insert the butt of a skein to the right of the bows, take its other end through under the border on the left, up over the border to the front on the

same side, then under the border to the inside on the right of the bows and up over the border on this side ready to begin the lapping. Thie forms a cross on the outside of the basket. To finish the handle on ths opposite side, a similar cross is made and the end of the skein worked along under the border to secure it.



Leaders.—These are shown on all the lapped handles illustrated, their main function being to introduce pattern as a relief from the plain lapping. They can also be made to perform a useful secondary office, that of holding the handle securely to the basket. For this purpose the butt end of leader-rod (skeins are not strong enough, although they are very suitable for forming pattern) is cut to a long tongue as in scalloming. This tongue is then pushed up between the waling and the bows, cut side outwards, and the remainder of the rod is brought up in front, thus forming a secure loop round the waling and the border. Plain lapping is then worked for a distance of at least two inches, after which the leader or leaders can be used to form a pattern by passing the lapping over and under them in a large variety of ways. When within about two inches of the other side, the leader-rod is cut to a long tongue as before, which is pushed up between the wale and the bows as at the beginning, the tongue being securely lapped in. The other method of securing a lapped handle is by means of pegging, the peg,

which is simply a piece of butt-end, being driven through the centre of the bow either at right angles to the side, i.e., from front to rear, or sideways, passing through both stake and bow or bows if desired. In each case a hole is pierced with the bodkin, care being taken not to split the bow or the peg is practically useless. It is absolutely necessary to secure a lapped handle either with the leader or by pegging, or both methods can be used in the same handle. Reference to diagram 25, and to the examples with lapped handles, will show the manner in which simple pattern is produced by passing the lapping-skein alternately over and under the leaders. The student will see at once that innumerable variations are possible. One, two, three, or more leaders, either skeins or rods, can be used, and the lapping can pass over or under all the leaders at once, or under some and over others in the same lap. Diamonds, chequers, and other interesting patterns can be used singly or in combination, and if dyed skeins are used as leaders, variety of colour can be introduced as well.

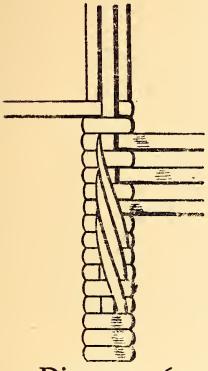


Diagram 26.

Diagrams 24 and 25 show small lapped handles. These have a single bow, and are begun and finished in a manner that varies only slightly from that adopted in the case of the larger handles across the basket. Small lapped handles are used on the linen basket, page 69.

Listing.—This is a method of adding a raised form of ornamentation to a lapped handle by the use of one or more additional skeins called listing-skeins, which are worked round a single whole-rod leader. In all listed handles, when the first section of plain lapping just above the border has been worked, the lapping-skein is taken once over and once under the leader alternately, a listing-skein being placed under the leader each time the lapping-skein goes under it. Diagram 26 shows a simple listed handle employing three listing-skeins. This type of handle will be seen complete on the oval buff shopping basket illustrated on frontispiece. After the section of plain lapping has been worked, the lapping-skein is taken under the leader and the first listing-skein inserted on the right-hand side. A lap is now taken over the leader, another one under it, and the second listing-skein is similarly inserted, and so with the third. The process is then continued by lapping once over the leader, once under it, then carrying the bottom listing-skein over the leader to the left and, turning it cut side uppermost, placing it immediately above the last lap and underneath the leader. When the plain lapping is to be resumed on other side of the handle, each listing-skein is in turn cut off and bound in with the

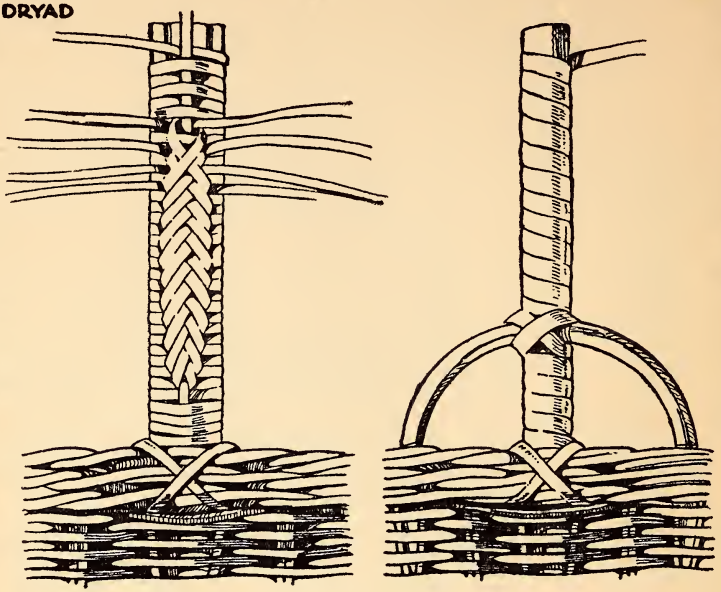


Diagram 27.

lapping so that both sides of the handle are exactly alike. Four or more listing-skeins can be used and half the number can be worked from one side and half from the other to form a herring-bone pattern as shown in diagram 27, where eight listing-skeins are used. The listing on any handle can, if desired, be added after it has been lapped (over and under the leader alternately) spaces being made under the leader with the bodkin to enable the listing-skeins to be drawn through. Listing is also shown on the small handle in diagram 24.

ROUND WORK.

As previously indicated, round work is on the whole the simplest, although it includes the relatively difficult, and at the same time, important, process of opening out the slath. It is important that the slath be opened out correctly as the spacing of the bottom-sticks not only has an influence on the shape of the bottom itself, but also on the spacing of the stakes, which, in turn, largely determines the ultimate shape of the basket. If an instructor is available he will do this and the other more difficult parts in the first few baskets, otherwise the

beginner is recommended to use wooden bottoms or bases for the first few attempts, the construction of baskets upon these being carried out on similar lines to those detailed for the tray (frontispiece). But if the beginner takes up the commendable attitude of excluding altogether any kind of "foreign matter," unless absolutely necessary, he is recommended to use skeins for the first few slaths as described on page 38. Before beginning the actual making of a piece of work, the cutting out (a workshop term which covers the selection of suitable rods for each part of the basket) should be carefully attended to. If two or more articles of the same kind are to be made, time will be saved and more uniform results secured if the stuff (another workshop term, applied to any sort of basket-making material) for the total number be cut out in one operation. This preliminary preparation is necessary for all classes of work, but will be described now as it applies to the making of the small round blackberry or egg basket illustrated on frontispiece.

Having soaked some two feet to three feet white and some brown of a smaller size (or white only can be used) and allowed this to lie under the damp cloth till mellow, place the white on the left of the table, and, with the remainder of the table-top clear and a hand-knife in the right hand, proceed to pick up the rods one by one with the left hand and deal with each according to the purpose it is to serve, thus avoiding the time-wasting process of picking over the bundle later in search of a rod for some particular purpose. The brown can be left on one side for the present. From the butt ends of five of the stoutest rods, bottom-sticks will be cut, six inches long, the remaining portions of the rods being slyped for stakes. The bottom-sticks can be cut off with the shears if desired, but the slyping of the stakes is done with the hand-knife, the rod being held with the left hand, and the cutting towards worker. Diagram 28 shows the slype, which is made by two cuts, one on the face of the rod, and one either on the left or right. The first cut can be made either on the convex or the concave side of the rod. The five bottom-sticks are laid on one side and the five stakes are placed together to have fifteen others added to them as and when suitable rods are taken from the bundle, each being slyped before being placed with the others. Similarly, rods suitable for bottoming, waling, siding and the handle are laid in separate places, to be tied together when the whole of the bundle has been distributed. Such an elaborate process of sub-division as that indicated is hardly necessary in the present instance, but experience will show the desirability of making a general practice of cutting out, adapting the sub-division according to the requirements of the basket or number of baskets of the same kind in hand.

The actual making of the present example is begun by piercing two of the bottom-sticks in their centres, and threading the other three through them, after which the slath can be formed either with skeins as described on page 38, or with rods as follows : Select two thin rods

Diagram 28.

of the same size and length, and insert both tops (from which a little may be cut) into the split on the left of a group of three, and work round three times, using the method of pairing as decribed on page 22. This and the remainder of the bottom is performed with the work resting on the lap. With the fourth round, the sticks are opened out, the groups of two into singles and the threes into a two and a one. Begin the separation of each group by taking the rod right down into position behind the groups as though the previous working were to be continued, and hold it there with the left forefinger. Remove the right hand from the rod altogether and bring it to the front. Separate the sticks with this hand and placing it between them bring the rod through to the front, then, and not until then, release the pressure of the left forefinger. By this means the pairing will be close to the preceding strokes, and the sticks evenly opened out, but the worker need not be discouraged if he fails in this part of the work at the first few attempts, as it is one of the most difficult operations in basketry.

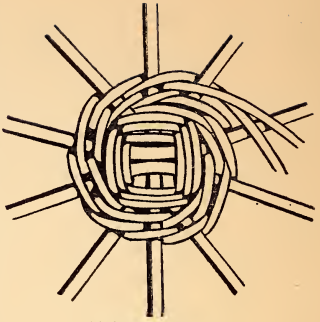


Diagram 29.

With the next and fifth round, the twos are opened out so that all the sticks are separated, and the remainder of the bottom consists of pairing round and round, treating each stick as a single. When the butts of the first pair are reached, two more butts are pieced to them in adjoining spaces by pushing the new butt through on the left of the old one as shown in diagram 19, page 40, which illustrated the method applied to randing. In the present basket, the brown stuff is now brought into use, and the remainder of the bottom filled out with it. The completed slath, before the addition of a second pair of rods, is shown in diagram 29. When the second pair have been worked to within a couple of inches or so of their tops, two more tops are pieced to them in the same way as for the butts, the "butt to butt" and "top to top" method being continued throughout the bottom.

Pairing is continued, brown stuff being used, till the bottom is four inches in diameter, care being taken to arrange the spacing of the sticks so that they will be equidistant when the bottom is completed, and to curve them to the front slightly so that the bottom will be saucer-shaped. When the correct diameter has been reached, the two pair-rods are slyped and pushed through to the front just below the

preceding round, the ends of the bottom-sticks are cut off close with the shears, and the bottom picked. Round or oval bottoms can, after the opening out, be completed with randing instead of pairing if desired.

In picking, the angle made with the work by the picking-knife is about 45 degrees, and pressure just sufficient to sever the end is exerted. This is not easy at first, and the shears may be used wherever practicable in the early stages of training, and will always be used in cases such as cutting off of the butts of fitch-rods, where great risk would be run in cutting the stakes or other parts of the work with the picking-knife. Ends should be cut as closely as possible, but not so close that they have nothing to rest against. The cut made by the picking-knife or shears is a slanting one, as nearly as possible level with the face of the work.

Having picked the round bottom, the next process is staking up, which is performed upon the table-top with concave or hollow side of bottom uppermost. The butts of the slyped stakes are first dipped in the bowl or other vessel of water, which stands on the floor near the table, and then pushed into the bottom one on either side of each stick end. If a basket with a curved or barrelled side is being made, advantage will be taken of the natural curve of the willow rod, so that when the stakes have been turned up they will curve outwards ; but in cases like the present where the sides are to be straight, the stakes will be inserted with the convex side uppermost, so that when the bottom is turned over and the stakes kinked up, they will curve inwards. When all the stakes have been inserted the bottom is turned the other way up, that is, in the position it will occupy in the finished basket, and the stakes kinked up sharply by inserting the point of the hand-knife just beyond the edge of the bottom, and giving the knife a half turn as the stake is brought up, thus opening it out so that it will bend without cracking. Each stake is allowed to fall back again, and when all have been kinked up, they are brought into a vertical position again and gathered into a previously prepared hoop a little larger than the bottom. The hoop is prevented from slipping off by pushing one or two stakes through between its coils, or turning one or two stakes over it and coiling them along temporarily as part of the hoop.

All the stakes are now tapped in close with the flat side of the iron, and the upsett is begun by inserting the slyped tops of three white rods about two-thirds the thickness of the stakes and of equal size and length. These three are now worked to their butts, the first round being worked well in between the stakes and ends of the bottom-sticks. When the first round has been completed the bottom is pegged to the work-board. Waling is continued with the three rods until their butts are reached, when three more butts are pieced in and worked out to their tops, which completes the upsett for this basket, approximately three rounds.

The hoop ought now to be removed, but if the stakes have been allowed to splay out too much it may be kept on until an inch or so of randing has been worked. When the hoop has been removed the ultimate diameter of the basket is tested by measuring across between opposite stakes at the proposed depth of the basket; in this case five inches with an inside top diameter of six inches. It may be mentioned here that inside measurements are generally used for basketware, but for convenience the depth is usually taken on the outside when the basket is being made, due allowance being made for the difference in inside and outside measurements. The brown stuff is now laid on the right-hand side and used for randing the basket to a depth of three inches, the work being levelled off all round at this depth. A piece of rod cut to the required length and used as a gauge is very useful in levelling off. Next about three-quarters of an inch of white randing is worked to give variety, this being followed by a little more brown to bring the depth to four-and-a-half-inches, at which depth it is levelled off and two rounds of white top waling, are put on, beginning with three tops, and ending with the three tops of a second set of three rods pieced butt to butt to the first three. The stakes are now damped, and the body of the basket completed by bringing them down to form the simple track border described on page 27. If a stake breaks off when being brought down in the border, it is cut off close to the wale, and a substitute stake inserted to its left. The basket is now picked both inside and out, and completed by the putting on of a twisted rod handle as described on pages 33, carried out in white.

Round White Bread or Fruit Basket, see page 66. One of the important things it is necessary for the student to learn is the selection of suitably sized material for the piece of work it is proposed to attempt. In the case of centre cane work, the novice can be helped by specifications giving the size numbers of the cane to be used for the various parts of the basket, but no such information can be given for willow work because, as previously stated, willows are not graded according to size, but only according to length, and then not very accurately. But even if exact grading according to length were adopted it would hardly be worth while, for thickness varies in rods of the same length. In the last resort, therefore, the worker must rely on his own judgment. Willows are a product of nature, and in consequence exhibit differences not only in proportionate size and length, but also in other respects, and the proper selection of material is no small part of the skilled work required to produce first-class basketry.

For making the present example rods from a bundle of three-feet stuff will be suitable. The bottom is eight inches in diameter, and has eight bottom sticks, four across four. The tying-in process is begun with two tops as before, and when these have been paired round three times, each group of four sticks is opened into two twos. Two rounds

of pairing are worked with the sticks in twos, and with the sixth round they are opened out singly, and pairing continued until bottom is eight inches in diameter, butts being pieced to butts, and tops to tops as before. There are thirty-two stakes and three rounds of upsetting, the latter being begun with four butts, slyped and inserted into bottom by the sides of four adjoining stakes. When the first round has been worked, one rod is dropped, and the waling continued with three rods ; three more tops are pieced to the first three, and three more butts when the butts of the second three are reached, this third set completing the upsett of approximately three rounds (the upsett may be a little short of the three rounds or a little more, but the rods are worked to their tops and left in either case). During the upsetting of this basket, the stakes must be brought well out as there is a pronounced flow in the sides, the inside diameter at about three-and-a-half inches deep being eleven inches. The given depth is in this case approximate as the siding consists of a French rand, the depth of which is determined by the size of the randing rods. This applies also to the round buff shopping basket in which a French slew is used. If an exact depth is required in the case of French randing or French slewing, the siding may cease before the tops of the randing rods are reached, or additional siding may be added. For the bread basket thirty-two randing rods of equal size will have been selected, and these are now worked to form the French rand described on page 22. Approximately two rounds of three-rod top waling are then worked, the wale being produced on the inside of the basket by carrying each rod behind two stakes and in front of one, instead of in front of two and behind one. The stakes are brought down to form a "four-rod-behind-one" border, after which the basket is picked, and completed by putting on two twisted-rod (double) handles on opposite sides of the border, one handle being placed over the crams. The depth of this basket is approximately three inches, and inside top diameter eleven inches.

Round Buff Shopping Basket, page 68.—The material for this ranges from the smallest Dicky Meadows up to rods two feet six inches to three feet. for stakes and handle rods. The bottom is five inches in diameter and is made in the same way as the bottom of the bread basket, with eight bottom-sticks, four through four. Thirty-two stakes are required, and these are inserted so that when they have been turned up the curve of the rod will be outwards. There are three rounds of upsetting, begun with three tops which are worked out to their butts, three more butts being then pieced in and worked out to their tops to finish upsett. In the upsetting, the stakes are brought well out so as to produce a bowl shape, although the curve need not be so pronounced as that of the example illustrated. After the upsett, a French two-rod slew is worked, then two rounds of top waling and the track border shown in diagram 11, page 27. This basket has a whole-rod handle as

described on page 34. The inside top measurement of the example is nine inches, but this could be less according to the style of basket desired ; it should not be more in a basket of this type.

Round Buff Soiled Linen Basket, page 69.—This is a larger and more advanced example, although as soiled linen baskets go, it is a comparatively small one. The task iof keeping the sides straight and almost upright is not an easy one, and this example may be regarded as being on the border line between fine basket work and work of a heavier and coarser type. The novice will be well advised, therefore, not to attempt this in the very early stages of training. Five-feet stuff is used for the stakes, and rods ranging from about two feet six inches up to four feet six inches for randing, bottoming, upsett and waling and for the lid. The latter has a skein slath, and there are two skein handles on the border. The bottom is ten inches in diameter, with ten bottom-sticks, five threaded through five. There are forty stakes and three rounds of upsetting, the latter not being worked in close between stakes and bottom-sticks but in the ordinary way a little above the kinks of the stakes. This is to allow of the foot-stakes being inserted later, and for the same reason the upsett is begun with three tops simply laid in. After the upsetting, ordinary prick randing is worked to a depth of two inches, the stakes sloping outwards very slightly as the inside top diameter of basket is not to be more than eleven inches or twelve inches. After the ordinary randing, two rounds of three-rod waling are worked, and then rib-randing, the butt of each randing-rod being pricked in as before. The spiral rib is formed by carrying the butt of each rod in front of two stakes, behind the next, in front of two again, and then working the remainder of the rod in the ordinary way. When a depth of eleven inches is reached, the work is levelled and two rounds of waling put on, to be followed by another small section of ordinary randing to correspond with the bottom ; or the whole of the siding may consist of rib-randing. At a depth of thirteen inches two rounds of top waling are worked, and then the stakes are brought out at an angle with five more rounds of waling to form the neck, these five rounds being produced on the inside of basket. The specimen illustrated has a "five-rod-behind-two" border, but a plait or rope border could be substituted with more pleasing effect.

This basket is now picked, and then turned upside-down to receive the foot. For this, forty stakes of about the same size as the waling are slyped and pushed down to the left and right respectively of each two of the original stakes. Five rounds of ordinary three-rod waling are then worked, the stakes being brought out at an angle to correspond with the neck, and the foot is completed by bringing down the stakes to form a "three-rod-behind-two" border.

Next, the two lapped skein handles are added, and then the lid is made. This has twelve sticks, threaded six through six, and tied in and

opened out with the skein as previously described. The skein ribbing is continued to a diameter of four or five inches, a pronounced curve being given to the sticks after they have been opened out. The remainder of the lid is filled out with three-rod waling, both waling and ribbing being produced on the convex or top side of the lid. In the waling, the butts and tops are not pieced as in ordinary waling, but both old and new ends are left on the reverse or underside of the lid. When a diameter about half-an-inch less than that inside the basket is reached the ends of the wale rods are drawn through and the sticks cut off. With the top of the lid facing him, the worker now inserts a slyped rod to the left of each stick end, and brings these rods down and forms them into a "three-rod-behind-one" border. The lid is attached to the basket by means of two hinges, separated by about two inches, and placed midway between the two handles at the back of the basket. Each of the hinges is worked as follows : A sound rod of suitable size is bent in half by placing the blade of the bodkin near its centre and turning the rod upon it, the two ends of the rod being then slyped level with each other. This doubled rod is then pushed through from the inside of the basket, an end on either side of a stake, just below the top round of waling. The rod is drawn through, its two halves twisted one upon the other, and the twist thus formed is carried up over the border and down through the lid between the last and last but one rounds of waling. The two ends are then taken through on either side of the stake in the same places as at first and worked along the stakes to secure them. This type of hinge, which is well adapted for round lids, must be left loose so as to allow the lid to be raised and lowered easily, because when a round lid is raised only one point remains in contact with the basket, the parts where the hinges are on either side separating from it, and therefore requiring a roomy hinge. The basket is completed by putting a small three-strand twisted loop on the front of the lid. This is worked in precisely the same way as the single twisted rod handle described on page 35, although the present piece of work, being meant to accommodate the finger only, is very much smaller.

OVAL WORK.

Oval Tray with Willow Edging, frontispiece.—Being oval in shape, the tray about to be described has been included in this section, but there is no essential difference between this particular shape and any other as far as the willow work is concerned, except in the case of square-cornered trays, which can have a sharp-cornered border if desired. Willow-edged trays are really nothing else than very shallow baskets with wooden bottoms or bases, so that by including some form of siding between the first two rounds of waling and the last two, baskets of various shapes and sizes can be made, all other details being

the same as for trays. For the present example buff is used, Dicky Meadows for preference, about two feet long. From a prepared bundle of this, select and slype the requisite number of stakes, which will be the same as the number of holes in the base. Now, holding the base upright on the lap, insert three stakes into three adjoining holes, butts to the front. The simple track border which forms the foot of the tray is then begun by taking the first stake over the second and leaving its end resting under the third, sufficient surplus being left to ensure that when the butts are cut off later, about a quarter-of-an-inch of unslyped rod will be left beyond the stake. A fourth stake is now inserted to the right of the third stake, the second stake is worked in the same way as the first, a fifth stake is inserted, and so on, all round the base, threading the last butt into position under the first. The work is then placed on the table and each stake is pulled up to make sure that all are tight. Four rounds of three-rod waling are now worked, beginning and ending with tops, the wale being produced either on the outside or inside according to choice. To complete the tray the stakes are brought down to form a "four-rod-behind-one" border with ends worked into a "back track." This pleasing combination of the two kinds of border is not a traditional one, and the writer has not seen it used in willow work. He believes it to have been introduced by the Dryad Handicrafts for use in cane work, but as it is equally effective in willow it is included here. The finishing stakes of the plain border are drawn through into position instead of being crammed, and the track, which can be begun at any point, is formed by taking each rod over the next two, under the next, over the next, and leaving it underneath the next ; or some other form of simple track can be substituted.

Oval, Brown and White Garden Basket, frontispiece.—This example, like the round blackberry basket, represents a relatively small and simple specimen of its kind, suitable in the earlier stages of training; but it may be mentioned now, that the reader is not asked to adhere strictly to these and the other examples given, all of which are intended to serve mainly as suggestions, and were designed primarily to include the various kinds of weaving, borders, etc. It will be far better for him to become as soon as possible his own designer, and he can begin to develop this interesting and important side of the work by selecting a shape, form of siding, border, handle, etc., from among the examples and combining these in a basket designed by himself. A simple example of this would be the substitution of a plait border for the plain border with the back-track in the case of the tray just described. The combination of brown and white willow is a pleasing one, and has the advantage, moreover, of employing the most inexpensive of basket-making materials, a further advantage being that brown stuff is more easily worked than either white or buff on account of its softness and pliability. For this very reason, however, it is not recommended for

use as bottom-sticks or stakes, where a certain degree of stiffness is necessary. Buff and white or brown and buff do not make such good combinations as far as colour is concerned.

For oval bottoms and lids, as well as round ones, the simple and relatively easy method of threading one set of sticks through the other set instead of using slath-rods to form the end sticks with their butts, is recommended. The sticks for the bottom of the garden basket are white, four fourteen inches long and nine nine inches long, the completed bottom being twelve inches by seven inches. This may be regarded as the smallest size in this particular type of basket, a fact which applies also to the other examples. From these, larger sizes using stouter material and a proportionately greater number of bottom-sticks and stakes can be planned by the worker, these larger sizes being adapted to meet the requirements of other larger kinds of baskets also. In the present instance, the nine short sticks are split in their centres and the four long sticks threaded through them. The short sticks are then spaced as shown in diagram 30, the length of stick beyond the pairs at each end being three inches. The slath is tied in with two pairs of white rods, on similar lines to those adopted in a round bottom, the first two tops being pushed into the split on the left of a group of four at one end. When the second pair has been worked out, brown is used for the remainder of bottom. Butts are pieced to butts, and tops to tops, and when about half the bottom has been worked, reverse pairing is used for the remainder, so as to overcome the tendency of an oval bottom to twist. In the reverse pairing, the two rods are at the back of the work, and the left-hand rod is brought to the front, passed in front of the next bottom-stick, and put through to the back again, this being repeated with each rod alternately. When the bottom is large enough, the remaining two ends are drawn through below the preceding round, the bottom sticks cut off, and the bottom picked.

The stakes are white, forty-one in number, a single stake being inserted at either end of each of the five short sticks in centre, the remaining stick-ends having two stakes each, except one in one end, which has one stake only, to make the odd number necessary in this case because the siding is a slew. For oval baskets an oval hoop is used, and it will be found a good plan to release the end stakes from this after the upsetting, and allow the side stakes to remain in the hoop some little while longer, as the sides of an oval basket tend to splay out more than do its ends. It may be mentioned here that an oval hoop is very suitable for oblong baskets, also as the stakes tend to bunch up in the corners of a rectangular hoop. The present basket has three rounds of upsetting, white, the first round four-rod, begun with butts. The siding is a two-rod slew, brown, the depth under the top wale being three inches, and the inside top measurements of the basket at this point being fourteen inches by eight inches. When the three inches of

brown slewing have been worked, one round of three-rod top waling, white, is put on, and the stakes brought down into a "three-rod-behind-one" plain border. The cross handle in the example has three bows pushed down by the sides of three adjoining stakes at each side of the basket ; the centre bow may be tongued at each end and used in the same way as a leader to secure the handle. The three bows are

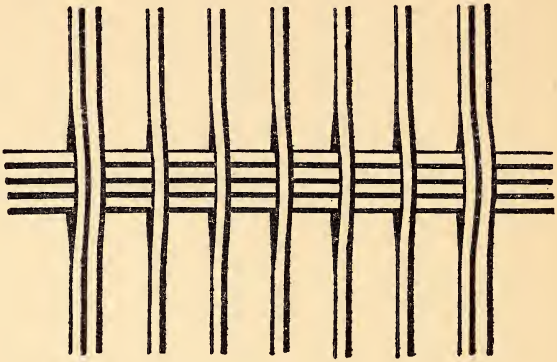


Diagram 30.

brought together by means of randing, brown being used, with one white rod to give variety. The butts and tops of the randing rods used for this purpose are left on the inside, and when both sides of the handle have been treated in this manner, the centre portion is lapped with white skein, with one or two skein leaders to form a pattern.

Oval Buff Shopping Basket, frontispiece.—The bottom of this is seven inches by four inches, with four long and eight short bottom-sticks nine inches and six inches long respectively. This bottom is proportionately wider than that of the foregoing example, a matter which can readily be determined by the manner in which the bottom sticks are set out. In this case, the distance between the outer pairs of short sticks is roughly one-half the length of the bottom, the remaining four short sticks being spaced equally between the two pairs as before. Except that buff is used throughout, this bottom is tied in, opened out, and completed with ordinary and reverse pairing in the same way as that of the garden basket. It is also staked up in a similar way, there being thirty-nine stakes. This example, it should be mentioned, is an extra small and fine one of its type, and the same number of bottom-sticks and stakes could be used in a larger basket, one with a ten-inch by seven-inch bottom. The upsetting, which is begun with tops, consists of four rounds of three-rod waling, and the siding is a three-rod slew. This is carried to a depth of four inches, with an inside measurement at

this depth of nine inches by six inches, and two middle stakes at each side are treated as one to form bow-marks, two or three stout pieces of rod being placed between to keep them apart after an inch or so of siding has been worked. In the border, in this case a rope, the left-hand stake of the two is passed by and cut off after the border is finished. Two or three bows are next inserted in the bow-marks, and a listed skein handle as described on page 43 worked, the leader-rod being tongued at each end and used to secure the handle as explained on page 42.

RECTANGULAR WORK.

In the basket trade, all rectangular work is known as "square," but in this connection it is better, perhaps, to depart somewhat from traditional usage, and confine the term square to baskets whose four sides are equal, using "oblong" to designate baskets which have two long sides and two short ones. As previously indicated, rectangular work is on the whole more difficult than oval, and more difficult still than round ; but as far as rectangular bottoms are concerned, the writer is not at all sure that these would not make one of the best preliminary exercises. One might go even further and suggest that the making of a baby's basket described below would be little, if any, more difficult than the making of a simple round basket. This is chiefly because the corners of the baby's basket are not square at all, but rounded ; and it is the corners of rectangular baskets which present the most difficulty. These have a strong tendency to slant to the left, this being caused by the upsett. During the upsetting, therefore, the corners of all rectangular baskets should be held well over to the right. Another tendency which has to be counteracted is that of the sides to bulge out beyond the corners. The most important stakes in a rectangular basket are those next to the corners, and they should be kept well in while the stroke which passes in front of them is being worked. Another tendency to be checked in rectangular work is that of the stakes to bunch together in the centre of the sides and ends, and here again, the stakes next to the corners are most important. They must be kept parallel with the corners, and not allowed to slant away from them, for it will be found that if the stakes next to the corners are kept right it will be a fairly simple matter to prevent the others from going astray. After upsetting a rectangular basket, it will be found a good plan to put ties from side to side and end to end immediately above the upsett, to prevent the sides and ends from bulging. The rods used as ties are cut away when the basket is picked. Two kinds of corners are commonly used in rectangular work, those which employ corner-sticks or posts, and those which do not. The use of corner-sticks is to be recommended to amateurs and craft workers, as they greatly simplify the task of getting a true shape, and also have a better appearance. The

other corner, sometimes called a blunt corner, is formed on the stakes at the ends of the sides and the ends of the basket, these stakes being set somewhat closer together than they are when a corner-stick is placed between them. If blunt corners are used, each of the corner stakes may be strengthened by inserting a stout piece of dry rod by its side, with butt end uppermost. The method of using corner-sticks is described a little later, the baby's basket now to be described having neither corner-sticks nor blunt corners, but rounded ones, which, strictly speaking, bring it within the category of oval work as far as its top is concerned. The bottom however, is a true oblong one, and the sides and ends are to be kept flat as in rectangular work.

Oblong Baby's or Work Basket, page 67.—In rectangular bottoms, the sticks can either run lengthwise or crosswise, a larger number being necessary if the latter method be adopted. The lengthwise method is recommended, but there is something to be said for the other, particularly in the case of a relatively long bottom, as by the crosswise method the sides can be made absolutely parallel, the outside bottom-sticks being in this case at what will be the ends of the basket, whereas by the other method it is a matter of some difficulty to prevent the outside sticks from drawing inwards and thus making the bottom narrower at one end than at the other. This tendency on the part of the outside sticks to draw in may, however, be checked by the use of the simple device shown in diagram 31, where the bottom sticks for the present example are in the screwblock ready for the work to begin. It will be seen that the left-hand outside stick is nailed to the wooden cross-piece, and the right-hand outside stick is fixed to it by an awl thus enabling the distance between the sticks to be adjusted at will. If it is found that the bottom is becoming too narrow, the awl is removed from the cross-piece and re-inserted more to the right, to be moved to the left again if necessary later on. In close-randed work in particular, it will be found necessary to have the outside sticks farther apart at the top than the actual width of bottom, and it will usually be necessary in the case of light randing also.

For the baby's basket, six buff sticks, twelve inches long, will be required, four of them about the thickness of a lead pencil, and two for the outside-sticks, a little thicker. These are inserted, butt and top, in the screw-block, the distance apart of the outside-sticks being seven inches, the sticks being sloped off at their ends where necessary, to enable them to be inserted in screw-block without making the aperture too large to hold the smaller ends. When the block has been screwed up tightly, and the cross-piece adjusted so that the outside-sticks are about half-an-inch farther apart at the top than the bottom, the randing of the bottom with two feet six inches to three feet buff can be begun. First of all, however, a pair is worked in the case of a bottom, this being unnecessary for a lid, in which the randing is begun immediately upon

the screw-block. The pair is formed by placing a long rod between the first and second sticks with about half its length in front and half at the back, the butt end being in front. The other end is then brought round the outside stick to the front, behind the second stick, and to the front again, and pairing is continued until the butt end of the rod rests against the front of the right-hand outside-stick. At this point, the pairing is discontinued, the butt end being taken round the outside-stick, through to the front, in front of the stick next to the outside-stick, and left at the back of the work resting against the next stick. The other end of the rod, which was left in front, is then taken through to the back on the left of the outside stick, brought round the latter, and then used to begin the ordinary randing, backwards and forwards. When the top of the first and successive rods is reached, this is left at the back, and a new butt laid in the next space so that it rests against the same stick, also at the back ; or the rods may be pieced butt to butt and top to top. When the bottom is a little short of ten inches long, another pair is worked in the same way as the first, except that the butt, instead of being left against the stick, is pushed through below the last stroke, between the second and third sticks from the right, where the other end of the rod projects to the front. Both these ends are then cut off, the bottom is removed from the block, picked, and the ends of bottom-sticks cut off close. The cross-piece will previously have been removed when the work has got too close to it to allow of the rods being taken round the outside-sticks.

Before staking-up it is necessary to decide whether the "right" side of the bottom shall be above or below in the finished basket. If the interior of the basket is to be left exposed to view, then the rough side will be underneath, but if not, the smooth or "right" side will be underneath. The staking of the ends of a rectangular bottom is performed in the same way as for a round or oval basket, the stakes being pushed in by the sides of the ends of the bottom-sticks. In the present basket a stake will be inserted by the side of each outside stick, and one on each side of the other four sticks, one stake being left out to make an odd number. The stakes along the sides of a rectangular basket (or ends if the sticks were placed crosswise) are inserted into holes made through the centre of stick with the bodkin, the hole slanting upwards somewhat, so that butt of the stake will be on the upper side of the bottom, to be cut off close when the basket is picked. In the present instance there will be thirteen stakes, buff, at each side, the two outer ones in each case being put in a little distance from the corners, then one in the centre of the side, and the remainder spaced equally. After this has been done an additional stake is placed at each corner between the existing two to form the rounded corners introduced into this particular basket. In staking up rectangular baskets, it is usual to put in the end stakes first and gather them into the hoop,

then proceed to insert the side stakes, kinking them up and putting them into the hoop one by one. Our present example now has four rounds of buff upsetting, three-rod throughout, begun with two sets of tops, one at each end near the left-hand corner. After this the basket is sided with buff skeins to a depth of three inches, the inside top measurements being twelve inches by eight inches. Two rounds of buff three-rod top waling are then put on, and the basket is completed by working the simple plait border described on page 30.

Close Randed Picnic Basket, Buff throughout, page 66.—This may be regarded as an advanced example, but can be simplified by being made light-randed instead of close-randed. The inside dimensions, which include the length and width of the bottom, are as follows :—twelve inches by eight inches by four inches deep. The basket is upright or nearly so, making the details of the top measurement unnecessary ; it is usual in this kind of basket to allow the sides to flow slightly so that the top measurement, taken inside the border, is the same as that of the bottom. With regard to the depth, if this is taken on the outside before the border, it will be approximately the same inside including the border, the thickness of the bottom accounting for the difference between the inside and outside overall measurements. The bottom has seven sticks, and is made in the same way as that of the previous example, except that the iron is in continual use, beating the work close. This continual beating exerts a great pull on the outside-sticks of the bottom and the lid, so that it will be necessary in each case to set the sticks farther apart by adjusting the cross-piece so that they are an inch or more farther apart at the top than at the bottom. As the randing proceeds, the measure or a gauge will be used from time to time to test the width of the work. This basket has fourteen by ten stakes, the corner ones being placed so as to allow of the introduction of a corner stick about three-eights-of-an-inch in diameter between them. It will be almost impossible for the novice to carry a basket such as this up straight without some mechanical aid, and there is no reason to scorn such a help even when one becomes expert. Diagram 33 shows a simple but efficient home-made frame for holding the corner-sticks in position. This is of wood and can be adjusted by means of the screws to various sizes and proportions of length and width. The wood for the centre-piece should be at least half-an-inch thick, but the corner pieces need not be so stout. Each of the latter has a nail at its end which is driven into the top of corner-stick, which should be two or three inches longer than the depth of basket so that the frame is high enough not to interfere with the siding. The four corner-sticks are sloped at one end and the cut part placed against corner of bottom when the first round of upsetting reaches it, one rod of the upsetting being laid behind the corner-stick, and the remainder passed in front of it just as though it were an ordinary stake. The

upsetting is begun with a set of tops at each end as before, and the beginner will find it simpler to make the first round a three-rod one, although a four-rod first round is more usual. After the four corner-sticks have been fastened into position by the first round, the frame is placed in position, and three more rounds of upsetting added. The close-randing, which may be begun at both ends of basket near left-hand corner, is then worked to a depth of two inches, levelled off, and two rounds of three-rod waling put on. A twisted-rod handle is now worked on to what is to be the front of the basket, two rods being used, and the randing is then continued to a depth of three-and-a-half inches, to be followed by two rounds of top waling, three-rod. The stakes are then brought down into a four-rod-behind-two plain border with sharp corners, the corner-sticks having been cut off close to the wale, and a rod inserted into a hole made with the bodkin in the top of each, for use in bordering. To produce a sharp corner in the border proceed as follows : When the stroke from the front has been laid behind the corner stakes, bring down both the stakes on left of corner to join it, so that there are three to the right of the corner stake instead of only two. Holding these three from underneath, with the left hand, palm uppermost, bring up the next rod from the front (the right-hand rod of the left-hand pair) and hold it against the corner stake with the left thumb. Do the same with the right-hand rod of the next pair, so that two rods are being held by the left thumb, side by side and close up to the corner stake. Now, with the right hand, bring the right-hand rod of the pair underneath these two sharply over them, behind the stake on the right of corner stake, and to the front, leaving it there as a single. Next take the left-hand rod of the two held by the thumb and carry it behind the third stake from corner and to the front, and bring the corner stake down alongside it. There is now a single and a three at a corner. Work the single rod first, bringing its complementary stake down with it, and then the right-hand rod of the three, leaving the other two rods to be cut off later. The border is now continued in the ordinary way till the next corner is reached, the single rod being used as though it were the right-hand one of a pair.

After the basket has been picked, two staples are worked on the border in front, i.e., that side where the handle has been put. The staples are placed above the fourth stake from each corner, and are worked as follows : Bend a rod in half and loop it round the two inside strokes of border, then place a second rod between the two halves, and form the three members into a simple three-way plait. Continue the plaiting for about two inches, and, after cutting the ends level, take the whole through a hole made with the bodkin, slanting from the centre of border on top to the inside just under the two strokes round which the first rod was looped. Undo the plait to this point, and leaving one end to be cut off secure the other two by working them along under

the border. The height of the staple thus formed should be just sufficient to allow a rod to be passed through above the lid, which has a hole to accommodate the staple.

The lid is now proceeded with. This has eight sticks, and its width is the same as the outside width of the top of basket. After the sticks have been placed in the screw-block, and the cross-piece placed in position, close-randing is begun and continued to the point where the first hole is to be formed, an allowance of about an eighth-of-an-inch being made for the border at the end of the lid, which is to be added later. The hole is formed by turning the randing on the stick next to the outside stick ; the hole can be formed either on the right or the left of the lid, but the right is perhaps the easier. When half-an-inch of randing has been turned on the second stick, a rod is slyped and pushed down alongside the outside-stick, then bound closely round it for half-an-inch, and used to continue the randing in the ordinary way. The distance between the first hole and the second must be carefully measured, for it is not possible to alter it later, whereas the distance from holes to ends of lid are not so important as randing can be added or taken away before the sticks are cut off. When the randing has been continued beyond the second hole for about the right distance, the lid is removed from block, picked, and placed in position on the basket, with holes over the staples. It is then an easy matter to mark each inside-stick with pencil about an eighth-of-an-inch short of the outside edge of the border of the basket. A little more randing can be added if necessary, or some taken away, and the inside sticks are cut off at the pencil marks ; but not the outside sticks, which must be left till the lid has been bordered.

With the reverse side of the lid to the front, the border stakes are inserted, one on the right of the left-hand outside-stick, and one on the left of each of the inside sticks, the right-hand outside-stick being left without a stake. A rod is now laid between the left-hand outside-stick and the stick on its right, the half of this rod on the far side is taken completely round outside-stick, binding in the stake by its side, then behind the next stake and to the front, the stake next to outside-stick being brought down alongside it. The single rod is now taken behind the third stake and to the front, and the second stake brought down alongside it. This gives the two pairs for the two-rod plain border, which is continued until the right-hand pair rests against the right-hand outside-stick. A piece of rod (or the point of the bodkin) is now inserted to the left of the outside-stick, and the right-hand rod of the pair which rests against it is taken right round both stick and rod so that it holds the two together, then pushed through from the front to the right of the other pair. The right-hand rod of the latter is then crammed alongside the outside-stick, the piece of rod or bodkin being withdrawn for the purpose. The other rod is then pulled tight and

brought through to the front under border to secure it. To prevent the border from slipping off a fine nail is driven through the last stroke on outside-stick, and into the latter, and the lid completed by cutting off the outside sticks and the border tops.

The lid is attached to the basket by two hinges placed opposite the holes. To form the hinge a rod is doubled round the two inside strokes of border as for the staple, but instead of adding a second rod, the two halves are twisted one upon the other as for the linen basket hinge. The twist is then taken up through the lid between the randing immediately against the outside-stick, carried over this stick, down outside border, and the two rods pushed through to inside of basket, one on each side of a stake immediately under the border, the twist being undone so that it finishes against the stake, and the hinge is quite tight. A fairly stout rod is now cut to a suitable length and used to fasten the lid, the staples being opened out by thrusting the bodkin through them if necessary

OTHER SHAPES AND KINDS OF WORK.

As previously mentioned, if it is desired to produce shapes other than the simple round, oval, and rectangular described in the foregoing pages—a laudable ambition—resort will be had to wooden bottoms cut exactly to the proportions required, hexagonal, octagonal, oblong with curved ends or sides, and other shapes in infinite variety. Given the wooden bottom, it will not be difficult to build up the sides and lay down the border by an adaptation of the methods given in the foregoing pages ; but if the out-of-the-ordinary shaped basket is to have a lid, this must be constructed on a rigid hoop turned to the desired shape. To this hoop, stakes will be scallomed as described below, and when the randing or other form of weaving has reached the opposite side of the hoop, the stakes are twisted or tongued, and secured by scalloming as at the beginning. Bottoms can, of course, be constructed in the same way, and the stakes for the sides of the baskets scallomed to the hoop ; and the worker who is really keen on mastering his craft will not resort to the use of wooden bottoms unless absolutely necessary. A fairly simple shape is the half-moon, which will now be described.

Buff Half-Moon Cycle Basket, page 68.—The curved part of the bottom of this basket is formed by turning a stout rod from a bundle of five-feet or six-feet stuff in precisely the same way as for a handle bow, a tie being placed across the two ends to keep them from springing apart. The bow for the present basket should be nine inches from side to side and four-and-a-half inches from centre of curve, these being the dimensions of finished bottom. To the curved part of the hoop, eight stakes are now scallomed, these being stout and long enough to be

turned up and used as stakes for the flat back-side of basket. In scalloming a long tongue is formed at the butt-end of the stake by splitting off about half its thickness with the hand-knife. This tongue is then placed with cut side against the hoop, and taken round under it, up on the inside, and then tightly over the stake to the right, its end being held by the next scallom as shown by diagram 32. The last scallom is turned to the left and its end laid under the next stake. The bottom is now randed to four-and-a-half inches from front to rear, the randing being turned backwards and forwards on the middle two stakes and the two on either side of them so that the work will be straight from side to side. The bottom is finished with a pair, the ends of hoop cut off, an extra stake inserted by the side of each, and the whole of the stakes, ten in number, turned up. Twenty-two stakes for the curved part are then scallomed on to the hoop, and, after working a pair along the back stakes to bring the level up to that of the scalloms, two rounds of three-rod upsetting are worked, corner sticks being added at each of the two corners. These corner sticks can be held in position by the cross-piece used in a rectangular bottom, as they are to be upright, and at right angles with the bottom. The front of the basket flows out to six inches from front to back at the top. The sides are now randed to a depth of three-and-a-half inches when a round of three-rod waling is worked, the two stakes in the centre of the back being brought down with the wale to form a short section of three-rod border. This is to form a hole to accommodate the lamp-bracket. Randing is continued to a depth of six inches, the randing rods being turned on the stakes at either side of the hole. Then a stout double cram is placed in the hole as shown in illustration, two stakes are scallomed to this in place of the two bordered down, and two rounds of three-rod top waling are worked. The two corner sticks are cut off and a stake driven into the top of each, the stakes being then brought down into a five-rod-behind-one border with sharp corners, which are formed in a similar way to those of the picnic basket. The border is begun at back, and when it has been crammed off, and the basket picked, two straps are passed through under the border at the back for attaching the basket to the handlebars. If a lid is required for a basket of this shape, the two ends of hoop would be spliced together at the back, and the lid-stakes scallomed to the hoop to finish them off; the bottom could also be constructed on these lines, in which case all the side stakes would be scallomed.

Scalloms are used also for the lids of the "Southport" basket illustrated on page 67, which has a hasp, noose, and "peg" of twisted rod, a twisted rod being twisted upon itself so that each of the two strands thus formed has its twist running in the reverse direction to that of its neighbour. In the boat basket illustrated on page 67, the handle bows are scallomed to the top framework of the basket. Both these baskets

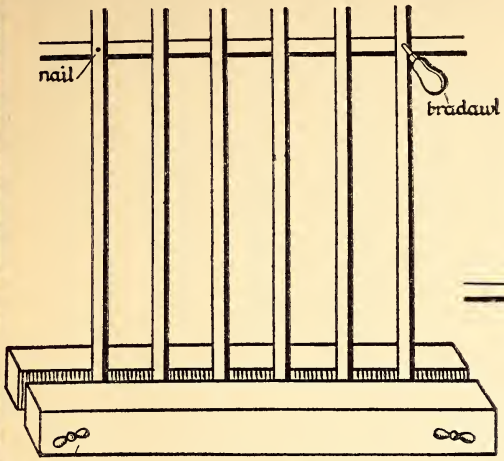


DIAGRAM 31
Bottom-sticks in Screw-block with adjustable cross-piece in position

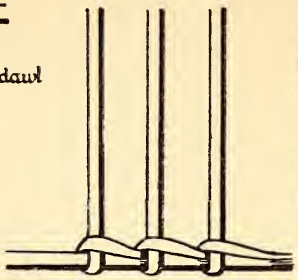


DIAGRAM 32
Scalloming

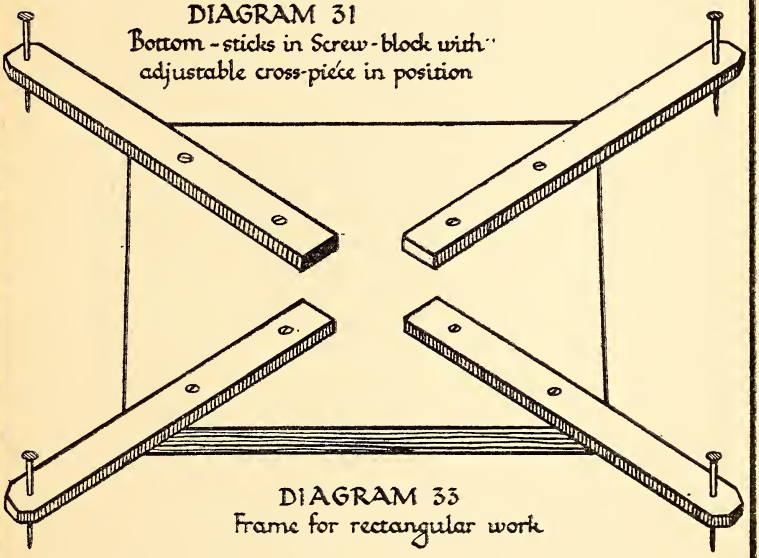


DIAGRAM 33
Frame for rectangular work

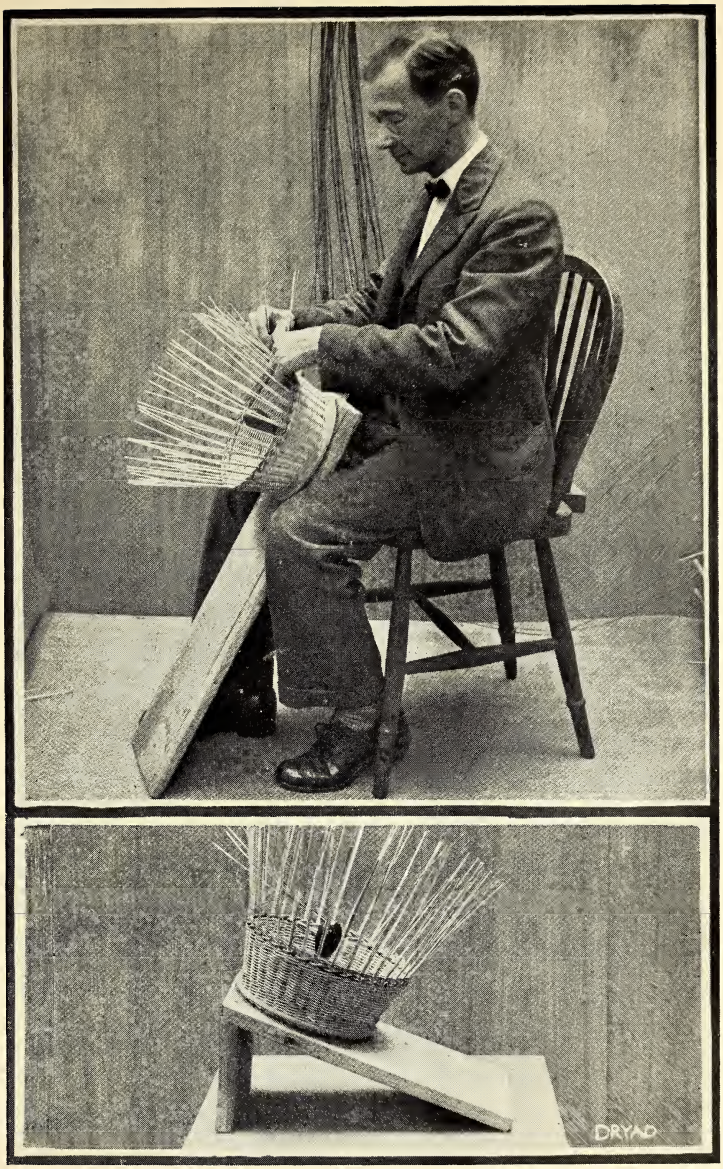
DRYAD

are examples of a class of work which the writer believes to have possibilities of useful development, namely, willow work on frames. In the case of centre cane-work, the Dryad Handicrafts supply ready-made frames to be filled in by the craftworker, and some of these frames could be used for fine willow work. The making of the frames would be outside the scope of most readers, but this type of work should not be disregarded if we are to see any sort of revival of the willow work industry in this country, for by the use of frame, larger baskets, furniture, and other wicker articles are brought within the range of the fine willow worker. The indigenous willow could be used in the production of the frames, as it already is in the case of the familiar "stick chairs" produced in large quantities in Somerset and one or two other parts of the country.

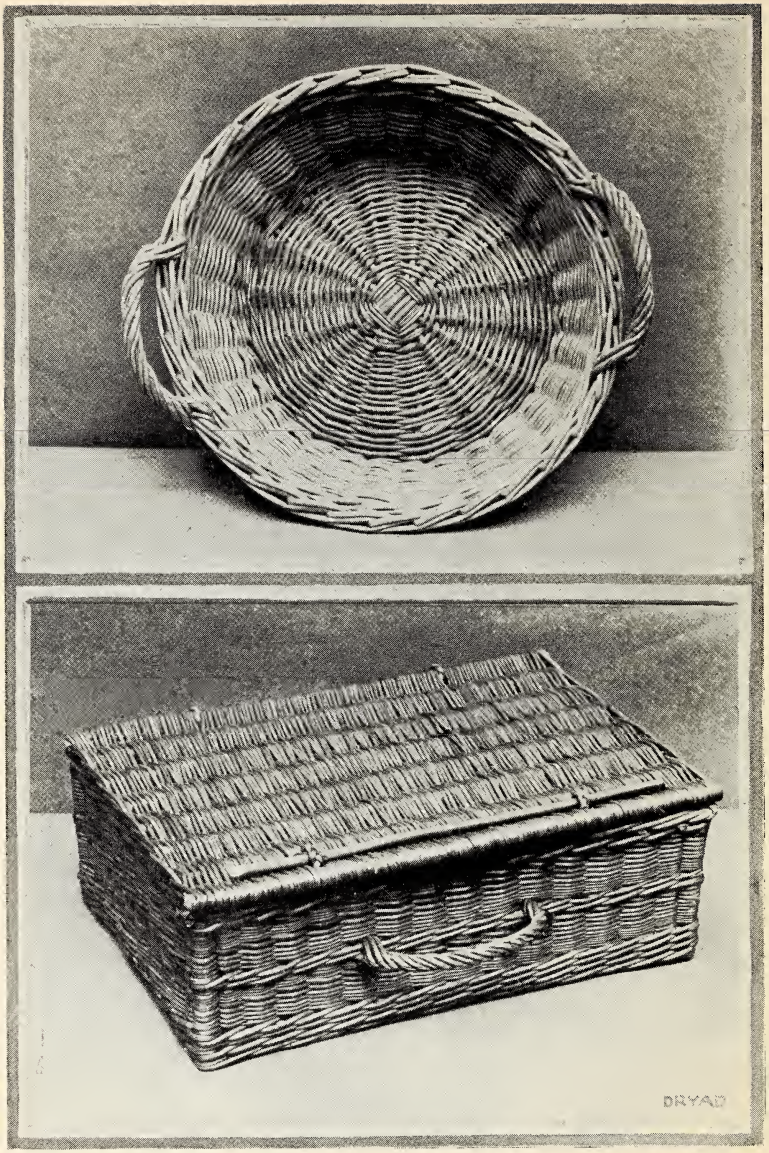
CONCLUSION.

The writer would like to conclude this little effort on a note of optimism, and this, indeed, would be quite sincere; but honesty forbids the raising of high hopes which the craft of willow basketry is incapable of satisfying. As a hobby or part-time occupation it has, and always will have, much to commend it, but from an economic standpoint it is at present hardly remunerative enough to interest the ambitious in search of a career. Our hope is in the growth of the appreciation of genuine handwork coupled with originality of design so that a sufficient number of lovers of craft will be willing to pay adequately for the skill and care embodied in a good piece of basketry. The writer would venture the opinion that originality of design is about the most important single factor in the revival of willow basketry in this country. What is wanted is not something fantastic or bizarre, but just different enough from existing specimens to be distinctive. The evolution of good new designs is by no means an easy matter, but is, nevertheless, well worth attempting, as the maker who can introduce new designs at frequent intervals has a big advantage over one who keeps mainly to traditional forms. The hint may now be out of place that it is simply foolish to attempt to compete with imported baskets by imitating them.

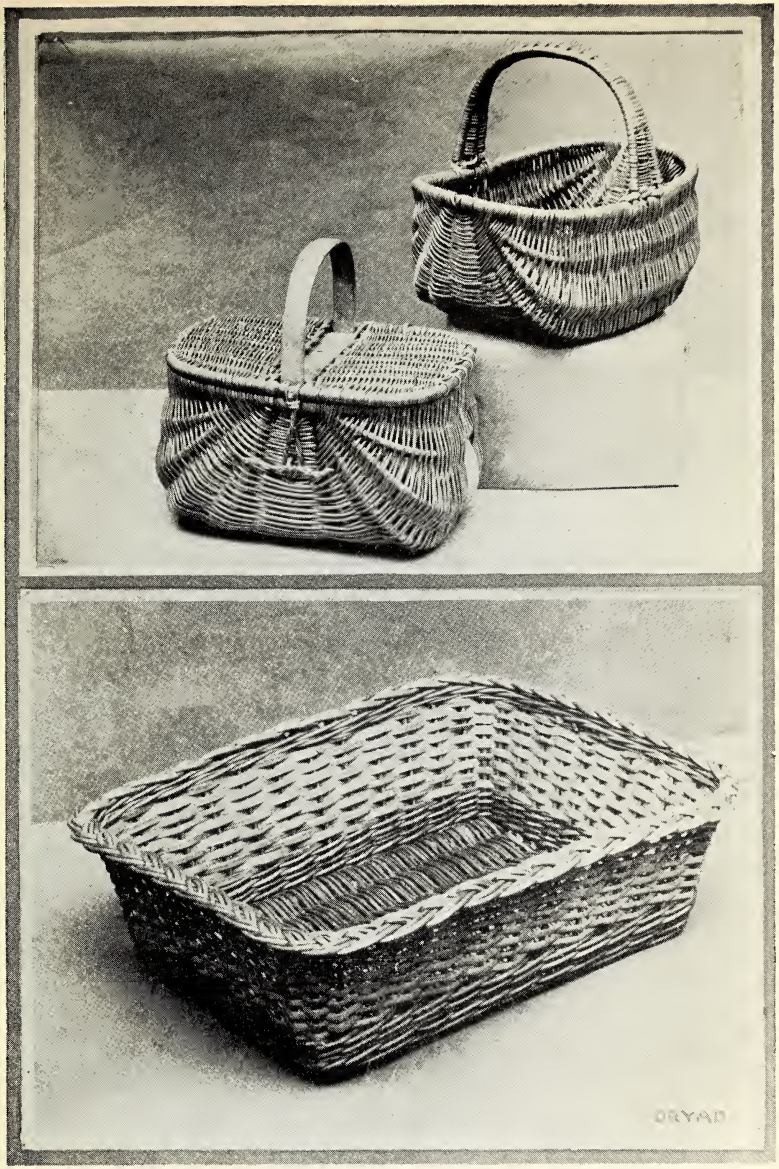
Just a word in conclusion, regarding the use of the mentality in this craft. Of the mental attributes which can helpfully be brought into play, visualisation is perhaps the most useful. If the student will build up a mental picture of the article it is proposed to make, and train himself to see it mentally, complete and perfect, before taking hold of a rod, he will find this a great help when the work is in hand. By so doing he is enabled to go forward without hesitation to the very last stroke, having already become familiar with the road by traversing it mentally; and by so doing he comes into close touch with the spirit of the thing—a very real part of it, perhaps the only real part.



Correct Positions for Working.



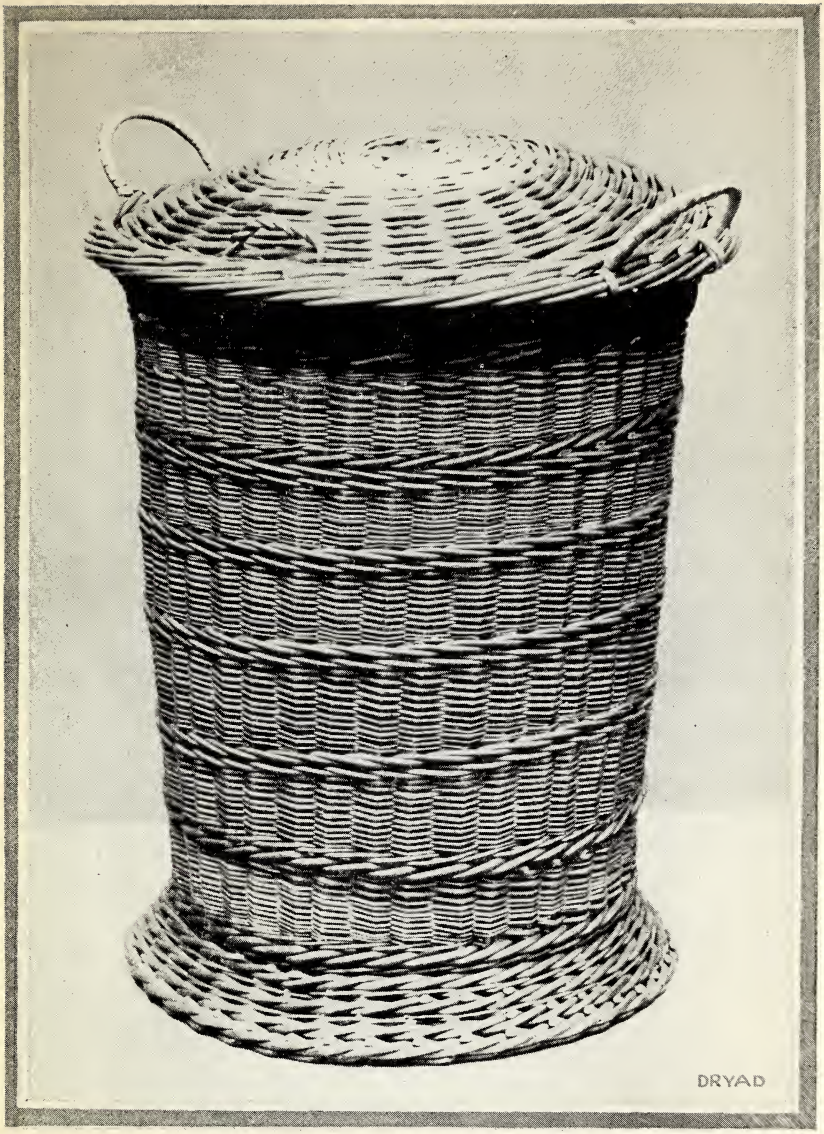
Above : Round White Bread or Fruit Basket.
Below : Close-randed Buff Picnic Basket.



Above : Boat Basket and Lidded "Southport" Basket.
Below : Oblong Buff Baby's or Work Basket.

ROUND BUFF SHOPPING BASKET.

HALF-MOON BUFF CYCLE BASKET.



Round Buff Linen Basket.