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BASKETRY

A PASSING INDIAN ART



IN a recent number of the Oregon Sunday Journal the following interesting article on Indian Basketry, written by Inez Filloon, appeared:

The Indian village, situated where The Dalles now stands, was known to the natives as Winquatt. This was the trading place for the red man, and in hundreds he and his fellows gathered here during the fishing season every year for barter and sports. The influence of the Wascos, who inhabited this district, was great, but there were Indians from many other tribes there also. Those from the north and east brought horses to trade for buffalo robes, furs and dressed skins, rope made of wild hemp, and buffalo meat. Those from the south frequently were accompanied by hostages from among the Modoc, Pitt river and Shasta Indians, who were disposed of as slaves.

It would be interesting for us of today to be able to step into the midst of such a gathering; to view first hand the manners and customs and dress of the Indians before they had come into contact with the white men. A great deal is known, to be sure, of their tribal rites and ceremonies, and of their mode of living, and many of the practices of primeval days are observed in part by the Indians of today, including the art of basketry.

It is the basket weaving of the women that is of especial significance as a foremost example of native American art, an art that is bound to vanish, and which, in fact, has, in a large measure, already disappeared.

In all climes, civilization has found women enjoying the knowledge of the art of basketry. They know all the textile plants, and are skillful in weaving their stems and roots and leaves into baskets, matting and other similar products without machinery. Basketry was very nearly universal through the western hemisphere before Columbus discovered it, while at least one-half the area was devoid of pottery.