

BA'SKET (Welsh, *basged*, or *basgawd*, a netting or weaving of splinters), a domestic utensil, usually made of willows, reeds, or chips, interwoven, although sometimes the materials are gold, silver, iron, glass, &c. Baskets have been in use from very early ages. The Israelites were commanded (Deuteronomy xxvi. 2) to offer unto the Lord, as soon as they came into possession of the land of Canaan, 'the first of all the fruit of the earth' in a *basket*. The baskets used on such occasions by the rich Jews were made of gold and silver, and were returned to the offerers; but those used by the majority of the people were of barked willow, and were retained by the priests. The ancient Britons were remarkably expert in the manufacture of baskets, which were much prized by the Romans for their neatness and elegance. The process of B.-making is very simple, and appears to be well known among the rudest peoples—even among the aborigines of Van Diemen's Land. In this country the willow is chiefly used in the manufacture of baskets. In several parts of England and Scotland, great attention is paid to the cultivation of the willow; and judging from the statements of some of the cultivators, the returns yielded are very satisfactory. One calculates his profits at £18, 10s. per acre, and another at £10 per acre. The tools required being few and inexpensive, a large number of poor persons are engaged in the manufacture of baskets, that are hawked about the streets by their wives and children. B.-making also forms a part of the industry of almost all blind asylums. Baskets are of all shapes and sizes, and their uses are so well known to all as to obviate the necessity of description here. Baskets to the value of £30,000 or £40,000 are annually imported from the continent.