

California : Basket-work.

Dalton.

Note on a Specimen of Basket-work from California, recently acquired by the British Museum. Communicated by O. M. Dalton.

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An important addition has recently been made to the Ethnographical Department of the British Museum in the shape of a large collection, chiefly from California and Oregon, presented by the Rev. Selwyn C. Freer. The series was formed partly by

Mr. Freer himself, but chiefly by his friend, the Rev. R. W. Summers, who resided in the above-mentioned States for a number of years as a missionary. The collection is especially remarkable for its baskets, and its stone implements and weapons. The former of these two classes is large and representative, furnishing a most valuable complement to the series already in the Museum, part of which goes back to the date of Vancouver's voyage. One of the most remarkable objects is a flexible cylindrical basket ascribed to the Umqua Indians (*figured here*). It has on one side human figures, and on the others representations of horses? and other animals, all inwoven in brown upon a buff ground. This specimen appears to be of considerable antiquity,



and has been pronounced by experts, such as Mr. Wilcomb, of the Golden Gate Museum, San Francisco, and Professor Dorsey, of Chicago, to be a rare and interesting example of a now extinct industry. The objects in stone comprise a fine set of the hemispherical mortars, with cylindrical pestles, which were excavated from graves in San Luis Obispo and S Barbara counties. The series of lance and arrow-heads of finely worked chert and obsidian is very comprehensive, and includes several examples of remarkable finish.

Of the larger implements, some are very rudely chipped and have a certain resemblance to palæolithic forms.

Among other objects may be mentioned sinkers, hammer stones, shell beads, plummet-shaped stones supposed to be charms, and a few objects in bone. The collection further includes a number of ethnographical objects from the more easterly States of the Union, including a few fine Catlinite pipes. Collections of this kind have a special importance on account of the parallels which they furnish with the industries of the late palæolithic and neolithic ages in Europe. We have here, continuing down to a comparatively recent period, the manufacture of implements and utensils which offer many analogies to those with which the later European bone caves, for example, have made us familiar. Implements of bone are far less numerous, but among objects of this material we may mention unpierced needles, small tubes or cylinders with rudely incised lines, flat implements for smoothing mats, and awls. In addition to the large stone mortars, there are similar objects of smaller size, and red mineral paint, probably used for personal adornment. The peculiar skill shown by these Indians in the manufacture of watertight and other baskets suggests we have here another parallel to a prehistoric industry. The ingenious and artistic people who lived in Western Europe at the period of La Madelaine may well have manufactured baskets of equal perfection, and equally adapted to take the place of pottery.

Mr. Freer's generous gift has most opportunely enriched a section in the Museum which has hitherto been far from complete.

O. M. DALTON.
