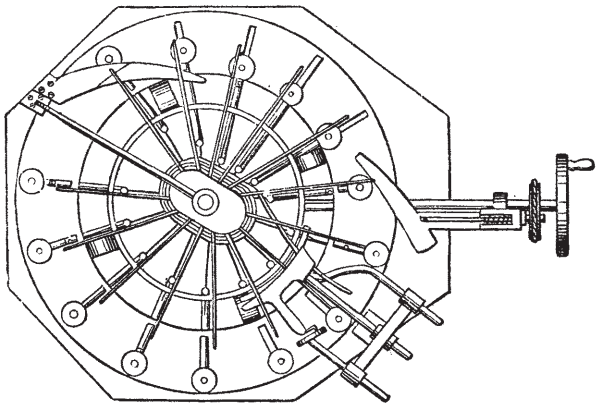
BASKET-MAKING. In making baskets, the twigs or rods of split hickory, oak, black ash, or osier, being assorted according to their size and use, and being left considerably longer than the work to be woven, are arranged on the floor in pairs parallel to each other and at small intervals apart, and in the direction of the longer diameter of the basket. Then two large rods are laid across the parallel ones, with their thick ends toward the workman, who is to put his foot on them, thereby holding them firm, and weave them one at a time alternately over and under those first laid down, confining them in their places. This forms the foundation of the basket, and is technically called the "slat" or "slate." Then the long end of one of these two rods is woven over and under the pairs of short ends, all around the bottom, till the whole is woven in. The same is done with the other rod, and then additional long ones are woven in, till the bottom of the basket is of sufficient

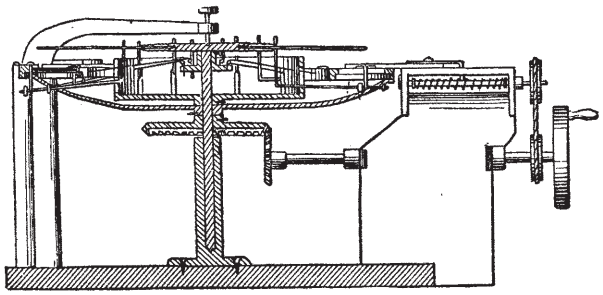
size. The sides are formed by sharpening the large ends of enough stout rods to form the ribs, and plaiting or forcing the sharpened ends into the bottom of the basket, from the circumference toward the centre; then raising the rods in the direction the sides of the basket are to have, and weaving other rods between them till the basket is of the required depth. The brim is formed by bending down and fastening the perpendicular sides of the ribs, whereby the whole is firmly and compactly united. A handle is fitted to the basket by forcing two or three sharpened rods of the right length down the weaving of the sides, close to each other, and pinning them fast about two inches below the brim, so that the handle may retain its position when completed. The ends of the rods are then bound or plaited in any way the workman chooses. This is a basket of the rudest kind. Others will vary according to the artist's purpose, skill, and materials. When whole rods or twigs are not adapted to the kind of work required, they are divided into splits and skeins. Splits are made by

305.



cleaving the rod lengthwise into four parts, by means of an implement consisting of two blades, crossing each other at right angles, the intersection of which passes down the pith of the rod. These splits are next drawn through an implement resembling a common spoke-shave, keeping the pith presented to the edge of the iron, and the back of the split against the wood of the implement. The split is then passed through another implement, called an "upright," to bring it to a more uniform shape. This consists of a flat piece of steel, each end of which has a cutting edge, like that of an ordinary chisel; this piece is bent round, and the edges are made to approach each other as near as desired by means of screws, the whole being fixed into a handle. By passing the splits between these two edges, they are reduced to any required thickness. The implements required in basket-making are few and simple, consisting, besides those just mentioned, of knives, bodkins, and

306.



drills for boring, leads for steadying the work while in progress, and when it is of small dimensions, and a piece of iron called a "beater."

The splints of various kinds of wood, particularly certain species of ash, elm, and birch, are extensively employed in basket-work. These splints are obtained by beating logs of the wood with a maul, thus loosening and separating the different layers or rings into narrow strips. This is the simple and primitive process, and is necessarily slow, and restricted to woods of a free texture. Several machines have been invented and are now employed for the manufacture of splints, by which different kinds of wood, prepared by steaming or otherwise, are cut or rived into the required form. "Basket-willow" and "osier" are terms commonly applied to the species of *salix* most used in basket-work.

Figs. 305 and 306 represent a basket-making machine. A circular wooden bottom-piece with radially projecting basket-strips is attached to the end of a rotating shaft, and during the rotation of the bottom and radial strips a filling-carrying device having a vibratory motion passes over and

under the radial strips, and leaves the filling carried by it. This filling is laid in compactly by reed-like pieces. In the machine represented, the skeleton of a top or bottom is clamped to the shaft by set-screws. The end of the filling is fed through the apron. Motion is applied to the driving-shaft which rotates the skeleton. The pad of the apron is vibrated by the action of the eccentric-wheel that rests upon the ring, causing the rods to vibrate alternately above and below the filling between them (Fig. 305).