

The Hemp Industry of the Philippines.

THE prospector seeking for investment need not dig below the surface in the Philippines. The culture and harvesting of hemp is the biggest gold mine he will find. The islands seem to have been especially made for the benefit of the abaca plant. The moist though not swampy country to the south of Manila, the Camarines, Samar, Leyte and Cebu, would produce a solid overgrowth of the abaca trees if left to take its own course.

The tree itself resembles closely the banana palm, but differs essentially in the fineness of its fibre and its barrenness of fruit. The natives, too, seem to have been especially provided for the hemp country. Tending to improvidence and indolence, the hemp industry furnishes them employment whenever they run short of rice and tobacco, for hemp can be harvested almost at any time except during the short rainy season. Attempts have been made to transplant the hemp trees, taking them only as far away as Borneo, but the musa textiles refused to collaborate with any but Philippine soil. The Pacific slopes of the volcanic regions of the islands produce the best plants. Although the abaca tree coddles to thin soil, and rather dry, quickly drained localities, the trunk and leaves demand frequent and abundant moisture. Given the proper conditions, the vast plantations will thrive like asparagus beds. Very little cultivation is required; an occasional weeding and a replanting at the harvest time and nature does the rest. The crop is not gathered as if it were a corn field, but the trees are found in all stages of growth, and the native passes through regular routes, slashing a plant here and there, his practiced eye the sole judge of its maturity. Three years is the proper age for harvesting. The hemp-stripper goes forth much as a huntsman



HARVESTING THE ABACA, OR HEMP PLANT.

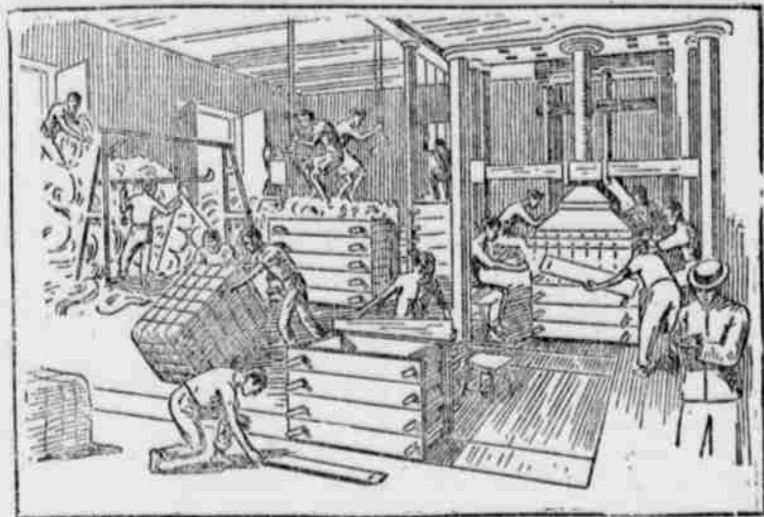
would. With his bolo in belt and a bamboo canteen full of rice slung over his shoulder, he hies himself to the uplands. After feeling the plants, which at the age of three years are about ten feet high, he proceeds to clip off a shoot and replant it. After a number of trees are cut the stripping process begins. All the leaves are torn off and the outer skin of the stalk is peeled off. Inside of the trunk is a pithy substance, and around this are layers of fibre imbedded in a soft juicy substance. The fibre must be separated from the stalk at once lest it rot. Many Americans have cherished the idea of exporting the trunk intact, but the enterprise is not feasible because of the perishable nature of the pulpy segment.

A bamboo-made bench is improvised, and at one end the stripper binds his bolo; the handle attached to his foot by another bamboo strip. Across the blade he draws the stalk until the fibre is thoroughly separated without injury, preserving its length of from eight to ten feet, and leaving it fine and beautiful that the tropical sun may lick up the moisture still bleeding from the operation. The work of stripping is very tiresome and requires the skill of a trained hand.

The white man has often attempted to improve upon the brown man's method of stripping the hemp, but despite large expenditures and ingenious mechanical contrivances no machine

parts. As well try to produce a machine to comb the snaris out of a woman's hair as to make a mechanical hemp-stripper.

The native is paid for his work in hemp, dividing the product equally with the plantation owner. When he cuts and strips all he can carry, he twists up the fibre into a great roll and goes down to the plantation owner's house, and there the division is made. They then hang up the rolls until the middle-man or contractor comes along and a bargain is struck. The bales are crudely fastened together and carried to the nearest port



BALING HEMP.

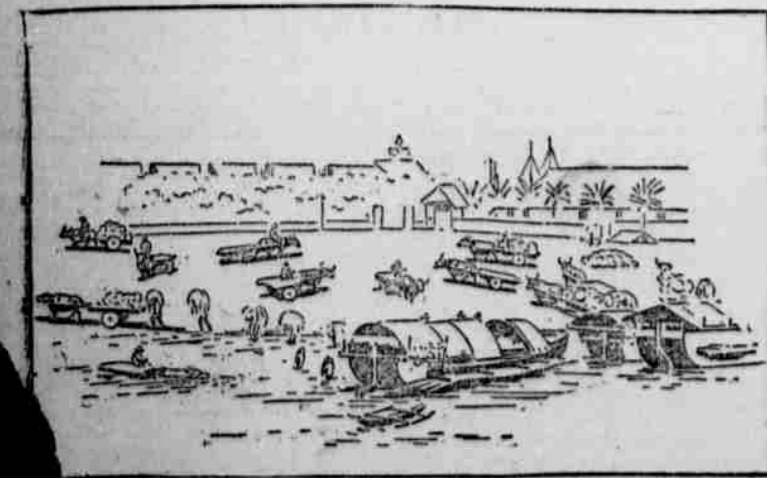
and shipped usually to Manila, where they are separated, rebaled and shipped either to Hong Kong, where there is an immense rope-walk, or to New York, Boston or London. The rope-walk at Hong Kong is one of the largest in the world. Its product practically supplies China, Japan and Australia. Very little hemp is made into rope or twine in Manila. Although crude rope-walks exist in different parts of the island, their manufactured article, although strong and durable, would not compete in the foreign market. Hemp subserves every purpose that leather might with the native. He twists it into sandals, uses it for harnesses, and it answers for binders in the building of his upland hut. The utility of hemp is well understood to the Filipino. The finer quality is selected and reserved for weaving purposes, being made up into really handsome cloth, while the ordinary hemp is universally used to make a coarse though durable material, worn generally by the natives, who delight in gaudy colors and picturesque though scanty costumes. There is still another texture woven from the selected strands of outer fibre, intermixed with the fibre of the pine-leaf. The cloth has the semblance



DRYING HEMP ON A MANILA WHARF.

of unfinished silk, and is pretty and durable, though not as beautiful or dressy as the pure pine-leaf fibre silk known as pina cloth, the best woven product of the islands.

The entire hemp industry of the Philippines is still worked by primitive methods and with simple contrivances. The native, though unambitious himself, is jealous of the Chinaman, and is averse to the Celestial getting control of the plantations or contracts, while scornful up-to-date methods himself. The "Chemo," however, has made inroads in this industry, as well as in others in the Philippines. Had he not, the development would



UNLOADING HEMP AT CEBU.

that takes the place of the steamers have been sums of money, mechanical machines, and peculiar nature of them to require the hands to separate its

not have been as rapid as it has. The native is thoroughly capable, and understands the treatment of the plant and its harvesting, and could be induced to work with regularity would be as good a laborer as the Chinaman, but the Celestial usually controls

the baling and local marketing of the

The presses at the seaport towns are crude affairs. After the fibre is classified and separated into three piles of classes, it is dumped in bulk into a huge press and a screw applied. After this operation it is taken out and put into another press of more regular design and of more imposing character. The second press is operated by an eight-armed capstan on an overhead platform, and a score or more of naked coolies, usually Chinese, push it around. The sight is most amusing. With grunts, laughs and confused jargon and rallery they urge each other on and manage to bring their strength together at loudly accentuated periods. A good-sized press will turn out 300 to 400 bales a day, and in the course of a year a million or more bales are prepared for shipment. In Cebu large quantities are handled, principally the products of Leyte and Samar, although in Manila the largest presses are in operation.

The classification of hemp requires the skill of an old hand, and the experienced eye of a buyer who knows all

the tricks of the trade. The native will bring his hemp down from the plantation in a moist state and offer it for sale at night, hoping thus to fool the middle-man as to weight and quality, but as this part of the business is mostly in the hands of the Chinese, there is little danger that they will be deceived or cheated. The Chinaman is the sharpest bargain-driver in the world, and whether it is hemp, silk or old junk, he is fully capable of looking after his interests. Fineness of fibre, color, strength and length determine the value and grade of hemp. If it be carefully stripped over a smooth knife, immediately and thoroughly dried, and of good length, it will bring the highest price. If it be carelessly stripped, juice being left in the fibre, it loses its color and becomes coarse. It then is considered of a second and third grade quality and brings a smaller price. The native watches the market, and if he hear that the demand is heavy he takes advantage of the middle-man and compels him to pay first-grade prices for second and third grade products. Formerly hemp brought in Manila from \$70 to \$150 per ton, always fluctuating according to the supply, at times going up to \$300 per ton, but at present the price is practically prohibitive, and it looks as if it would remain so for the next two years.—Edwin Wildman, in Harper's Weekly.

Wild Sheep Shooting.
The sheep began to move toward us. It had been a long climb to get beyond and above them, but now we had our reward. On they came, only two hundred yards away. I could see their white muzzles, as though they had been sticking their noses into a flour bag. Now I could see the wrinkles in the horns of the rams. The hoofs of the advancing flock made a swishing, pattering sound, and they were only fifty yards away. I took the nearest ram, and he never drew breath again. Johnnie's forty-four barked spitefully. He made a neat hit on another ram, further away than my already dying victim, but failed to stop it. Those sheep did not sail away like deer, touching here and there a high place. They flattened themselves out, shot around a corner, and were gone. Johnnie followed, and I was alone. In a few seconds I heard Johnnie's gun feebly thumping away. There was no echoing roar, such as you hear in the thick woods. I picked my way cautiously after Johnnie, and when I saw the jumps he had made, and the chances he had taken, I knew there was much for me to learn about hasty mountain travel. Johnnie shot six times, and two hundred yards ahead, on the crooked, rocky descent the sheep had taken. I found him on his knees by the big ram. Three bullets had struck.—Scribner's.

The Fat Man's Pre-Eminence.
We are pretty sure for long generations of seeing the preponderance of northern races. One of their peculiarities is that of being heavy eaters. This is inconsistent with a clean-built figure. The modern capitalist rarely comes from a climate like that of Athens or Naples. He fortifies himself against the long winters of New York, London, Amsterdam, Berlin and Frankfurt by substantial and oft-recurring meals. His body is a quick-combustion stove wrapped up in warm garments that prevent light, easy motion. Men of the money-making class have considerable girth of waistcoat.—London Truth.

The tonnage of the whole mercantile steam marine of Russia, Japan or Holland does not equal the tonnage of the merchant vessels taken over by the English government as transports.

DOGS GO IN SHOE LEATHER.

Canine Footgear as Worn in the Klondike.

One of the greatest dangers confronting travelers in parts of the world where dogs take the place of horses is that the dogs which draw sleds or transport goods may freeze their feet by contact with ice, and so injure them



A DOG SHOE FOR KLONDIKE WEAR.

that the animals become practically useless, and must be abandoned, to the endangerment of the life of the traveler who has put his trust in canine motive power.

As a precaution against misfortune of this kind it has been a common thing to wrap the dog's feet in cloth, a piece of leather or rubber. At best all of these, however, were crude and poorly adapted to carry out the desired object. They protected the dogs' feet, but at the same time interfered with the free use of their legs. The development of the Klondike has given special impetus to the demand for some proper protection for dogs' feet.

The dog's shoe, of which the accompanying photograph was sent from the far Northwest to Shoe and Leather Facts, is made of chrome tanned elk leather, and the upper of calf, making a soft, pliable and yet comfortable shoe. There is a tongue at the back, and the laces are at the back of the leg instead of on the front, because a dog's knee bends just opposite from a man's.

The dogs, it is said, take very kindly to these shoes. They become so accustomed to wearing them that they don't like to go without them, with the result that on the trail they will often come up to the driver in the morning and hold out their legs to have their shoes put on, not unlike children. If by chance the shoes should be laced too tight, they will whine and speedily make manifest their discomfort, wagging their tails with joy when the shoes are laced to their liking.

A VEGETABLE CONTORTIONIST.

Queer Freak of a Little Sprig of Dog's Mercury.

These two pictures relate to an extraordinary occurrence that befell a plant of dog's mercury growing in Charterhouse Cope, in England. A



HOW THE PLANT LIFTED THE NUT.

hazel nut had been attacked by a nut hatch and a clean round hole made it at one end—the marks of the blows of the bird's beak being clearly visible in the actual specimen. The nut was dropped by the bird after the kernel had been removed and happened to fall to the ground with the hole downward. Into this hole grew the tip of the sprouting dog's-mercury, and finding itself in a blind alley the plant was compelled to describe a complete circle within the cavity of the nutshell and to emerge at the same hole as that by which it had entered. Having ex-



HOW STEM CURVED THROUGH NUT.

ecuted this gymnastic feat the plant seems to have got along quite happily, for all its upper leaves are quite normal, though one of its lower leaves had to twist itself uncomfortably to get out to the light of day. The plant lifted the nut several inches off the ground as it grew.

How Camels Act in Water.

Camels cannot swim. They are very buoyant, but ill-balanced, and their heads go under water. They can, however, be taught to swim rivers, with the aid of goatskins or jars fastened under their necks. During the Beluchistan expedition of 1898 the camels were lowered into the sea from the ships and the drivers plunging overboard, clambered on the rumps of their charges, causing the animals' heads to come up, and thus assisted they were successfully piloted ashore.

THE EDICTS OF FASHION.

New York City.—House gowns in picture effects are a feature of the season and are attractive in the extreme. The charming May Manton



FANCY WAIST WITH FICHU DRAPERY.

model illustrated exemplifies one excellent style and is singularly well suited to all soft stuffs, such as cashmere, Henrietta, velveteen, wool crepons, albatross and the like. As shown, the material is cashmere in brilliant Oxford red, with the dots embroidered in white silk, and vest and undersleeves in white mousseline and cream lace. The fichu drapes the figure with singular grace, and the double sleeves add a touch of quaintness that greatly adds to the whole. The design will be found adaptable for stout as well as slender figures, as the drapery tapers sufficiently to apparently reduce

veal the front of the gown. When closed the buttons serve to ornament the front, and may be of cut steel, in cameo or any handsome sort preferred. The back of the blouse is smooth, without fulness at any point. The fronts fit snugly at the upper portion, but are slightly full and pouched over the belt. There are no parts, the fitting being accomplished by shoulder and under-arm seams. The capes and the collar close at the centre front, the edges of the latter being concealed when the blouse is worn open. The sleeves are two-seamed, and fit stylishly. The belt curves slightly to fit the figure, and may be stitched onto or worn over the blouse.

Low Crowns.
Although a great variety of shapes are seen in the new hats, some positively eccentric in their blazare outlines, there is little doubt that the model with sweeping circular brim, set on a broad, extremely low crown, has the palm of "grand chic." If you notice such things you become aware that the shape of such a hat is exactly right for showing off the long, curling ostrich feather and the demure wreath of roses, which are the two conspicuous favorite modes of decorating millinery in the present season. For a mid-season hat choose one with a broad, low crown.

Variety in Coats.
Every possible shape of coat, from the short, tight Eton to the long, loose carriage ulster, finds favor in feminine sight. However, the bigger and looser one's broad-tail or Persian lamb wraps may be the smarter it is. Coats, or, more properly speaking, cloaks, that drop nearly to the knees, are the most fashionable shape, and very few cling to the figure.

Girl's Box Reefer.
The box reefer has certain advan-



BLOUSE ETON WITH DOUBLE CAPE.

the size of the waist and is nowhere full enough to become bulky. As shown, the frills are of the material cut bias and edged with narrow black velvet, which clings to the figure, while the color tends to an effect of slenderness.

The foundation for the waist is a fitted lining with single darts. On this are arranged the parts of the waist proper, the yoke and the full front. The two latter are joined and attached permanently to the right side of the lining and hooked into place at the left, the lining closing at the centre front. The fichu is draped round the neck and outlines the front, being attached to its free edges. The sleeves are arranged over a fitted lining, which can also be used for the sleeve proper, if preferred. As shown, however, the lace cuff is faced on and the full mousseline is attached to its upper edge and again at the elbow, where it meets the upper sleeve that is cut in one piece.

To cut this waist for a woman of medium size five yards of material twenty-one inches wide, three and one-half yards twenty-seven inches wide, or two and three-quarter yards forty-four inches wide, with one yard of mousseline and one yard of lace, will be required.

Blouse Eton Jacket With Double Cape.

All variations of the blouse are much worn for outdoor wraps. The stylish May Manton model reproduced in the large drawing includes all the latest features and is essentially comfortable as well as smart. For immediate wear it is excellent in Venetian, broad-cloth velvet, and materials of similar weight; later it can be either interlined or made from heavier cloaking cloth. As illustrated, it is of satinated Venetian in canter color, with collar and cuffs of taffeta, and makes a part of a costume, but the design is perfectly suited to the general wrap, and will be popular for all-round service the season through. The little capes give additional warmth, and the straight turn-over collar, with the slightly flaring cuffs, are features of the very latest designs. As shown in the small drawing the fronts can be turned back, when the weather allows, to form tapering revers that re-

fringed over models of every other sort designed for little girls. The smart May Manton model illustrated combines all the latest features, and is sufficiently shapely to be graceful and trim, at the same time that it allows perfect freedom and falls in the simple lines that are so becoming to unformed childish figures. As illustrated it is made of tan-colored cloth, with collar of brown velvet and handsome smoked pearl buttons, but cover cloth, dark blue, and red and brown cloth can be substituted. The last is somewhat odd in its effect, and nothing is quite so smart as tan cloth in its various shades.

The coat is cut with straight fronts and is fitted with shoulder and under-arm seams that curve well back. The collar is joined to the neck, and is faced with velvet, then turned back, with the self-faced fronts that form revers. The edges and seams are all stitched, and pockets are inserted in each front. The coat is lapped over in double-breasted fashion, and closed with buttons and buttonholes. The sleeves are two-seamed and fit stylishly.

To cut this reefer for a girl of eight



BOX REEFER.

years of age one and one-quarter yard of material fifty-four inches wide, or two and one-half yards twenty-seven inches wide, will be required.