

DESERET#EVENING NEWS: SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 1900.

Where the Stuff Comes From and How It is Made-A Visit to a Great Hemp Plantation and a Look at the Trees-They Are Like Banana Plants, but Their Leaves Are Full of Silken Threads-How the Farms Are Managed and Their Immense Profits-Who Own Them-The Question of Labor-Description of the Big Hemp Warehouses of Manila and Their Human Pressing Machine-Filipino Land Titles -Can the Records Destroyed by the Insurrectos be Replaced ?-Our Government Lands, Etc.

present methods have been failures There have been numerous machines invented, but all have either torn the fiber or stained it, and there is still a good change for Yankee ingenuity.

It is said that the English who have attempted hemp raising have falled be-cause they have not been able to handle the workmen, and that only the natives or the Spanlarda can use the Filipine labor with profit. It might be the same with American planters. As to our people working the crop themselves I doubt whether they can do so successfully in this climate. As for me, grow tired very quickly, and I find that most Americans must keep in out of the sun during a great part of the day. THE QUESTION OF TITLES.

As to the prices of hemp lands, this depends largely upon the location, the owners and the title. In Mindanao the most of the lands still belong to the government, only a strip here and there bout the coast being under cultivation, In the province of Davao, which is blgger than New Jersey, there is not, I

you will find in any one of Ohio's eighty-eight counties. The rest all belongs to the United States government. There are government lands on others the islands, and among them wild lands, which could be cleared for hemp. The most serious question as to all lands, however, is that of titles. I had a chat at Zamboanga with Maj. Morrion, the judge advocate, who has been looking into such matters. He tells me that in the fight which the insurrectos of Mindanao had with the Spaniards all the records were destroyed before the Americans came, and that the evidences of title in most cases have been lost He says however, that all notaries were required to report the deeds they executed to Manila, and that from the Manila records many of the disputed titles can be established. I find that the records have been destroyed in the

and the vice presidents here tells me that but little of the land in this part of Mindanao is legally owned. Even in the town of Davao the most of the peo-ple are but squatters. The Spaniards did not question their rights as long as they paid the taxes, and it has been the same with lands taken up in the country. It is a question who really owns the big hemp plantation which I visited. am told that the Chinese merchants have in the past few months been laying claim to everything in their reach at Cottabato and other places, so that much of the land now supposed to have

proprietors will need to go into the courts before its ownership can be definitely established. FRANK G. CARPENTER.

DARING WHEELMEN

Rode Over a Viaduct 300 Feet High on a Twelve-Inch Coping.

Henry Wesson and Elbridge Hart. two New York tourists, hold the record for riding the Erie viaduct at Lanesboro. It was the result of a wager The viaduct is over a quarter of a mile in length and stands 300 feet from the ground. It is used by the Erie and is not designed for passengers. A strong coping 12 inches wide runs along the outer edge, unguarded by rail or any-thing else. Within the past two years many persons have fallen from the almost entirely in the hands of the nastructure, striking the rocks below. Wesson and Hart were making a bitives and the Spaniards, very few of the

cycle trip from Buffalo to their homes in New York, and when Lanesboro was



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FRANK G. CARPENTER. Commenter wrapped around the central stem, there der that there may be no danger of in order to get the 280 pounds, the being so many of them that the plant breaking it. When it has been drawn amount comprised in a bale ready for stands in the 11 ing is done in the sun.

celery. as a stalk 20.

Davao to reach the hemp plantation. After I entered it I kept close to my guide, for it was so large that I might have lost myself in it and spent days finding my way out. There were thousands upon thousands of these abaca or hemp plants, making a veritable forest, or rather a jungle in which there were neither roads nor paths. The plants were about six or eight feet apart, and they shaded the ground so that we in semi-darkness in going walked through it, although it was almost midday. Now and then we stumbled upon a cocoanut tree, but as a rule there was nothing but hemp, hemp, hemp. Here and there a stalk had been cut out, but sprouts were growing up from the bottom, and I am told that a hemp plantation once started will keep on reproducing itself.

From one of the proprietors I learned how the orchard was started, or in other words, how hemp is grown. It thrives best upon a hillside where there is plenty of moisture, but where the water to TO does not stand so as The land is first cleared, many of the larger trees being left standing in order to shade the young planta. The ground is burned over and the sprouts, which are usually the suckers taken from an older plantation, are set out about six or eight feet apart. They grow rapidly, but it is three years before they are ready for use. After this time they can be cut right along throughout the year, the only caution observed being to cut the plants when they are just about ready to blossom and before they bear fruit. Such plants as have fruit do not make good hemp the fiber being weakened by the strength of the plant going into the fruit. As the plants blossom the year around, the farmer can be kept busy cutting; there is no danger of his losing his crop by the hurry of harvest as in sugar and rice. The only cultivation necessary is to keep down the weeds, and now and then to set out fresh suck-

at its base is from eight to ten inches

thick. As the plant stalk is as crisp and juicy and it can easily be cut down with a carving knife. The men I saw cutting used bolos, the same knives that they use for cutting off heads. They are not unlike our corn cutters, save that they are heavier, and that they are kept as sharp as a razor. I had to go some distance from

HOW HEMP IS GROWN.

breaking it. When it has been drawn under the knife it looks just like a skein of fine slik and needs only drying to be ready for the market. The dry-After this the stuff is put up in hundles or twists much like a hank of yarn

and carried to the stores for sale. The planter usually buys the hemp gathered from his own plantation, paying his workmen for their half of it. The prices at times range all the way from to \$25 a picul, or 140 pounds. Owing to the war hemp is now very high, sell ing at \$25 in silver for 140 pounds. I sometimes brings as much as \$250 or \$300 a ton in American money, and there is one grade known as Lupiz, which has brought in London as much as \$500 a ton. This, however, can be raised in but small quantities, and it should not be regarded as a certain criterion in considering the hemp possibilities.

THE GROWTH OF THE INDUSTRY.

Hemp has been steadily going up it price since it was first exported, and this notwithstanding the size of the crop has trebled in the last twenty About fifty years ago the price years. was between \$4 and \$5 per picul. In the next decade it rose to \$9, and in the eightles the average price was \$11. Ten years later it had risen to \$17, and it is now, as I have said, up to \$25. These high prices are caused by the war, and there will probably be a fal within the near future. At present the crop runs in the neighborhood of a quarter of a billion pounds a year. nough to give every family in the United States enough for a clothes line and to supply all the children with jumping ropes, and still leave much to It would, in fact, give three spare. pounds of hemp to every man, woman and child in our country, and not ex-

haust the supply by 25,000,000 pounds. Of this amount the United States We use takes more than one-third. more Manila hemp than all Europe, excepting England, Great Britain coming next to us, but she acts rather as a niddleman for Europe than as an actual user herself.

IN THE WAREHOUSES.

During my stay in Manila I spent some time in the great hemp ware-houses. There are perhaps a dozen of them where the most of the product is sent to be sorted and classified before it is shipped to the markets of the world, It is taken to Manila from the islands in sailing vessels and small steamers. and it is brought in from the interior Luzon in cascoes, or great barges,

Next would come the pressing. The hemp is first packed in a framework of boxes which rest one upon the other, so that a press operated just like a letter press can be forced down upon them. The queerest thing was the working of the screw. This was done by Uhinese. Upon a platform high above the press thirty-two half-naked, yellow-skinned mortals trotted about, pushing the spokes of a wheel. Four grasped each of the eight great spokes and all ran round and round as fast as they could go, turning the screw which formed the axle of the wheel, thereby pressing the hemp tight in the bale. A bell rung bewas the signal for their starting and stopping, and when they moved it was on the dead run, pushing, strain-

ing and sweating as they did so. The bales are put up in the most eco-nomical way. They are wrapped in basketwork mats of palm leaves and are tied with strips of rattan, so that the cost of ties and sacking is practically nothing. I asked the proprietor of the warehouse why he did not put in machinery and save the employment of so many men. He replied that it would be cheaper for him to do so, but that his insurance would be thereby increased, and he preferred to work by the old method, which has been in vogue here since the beginning.

A HEMP TRUST.

There is danger that there will be a hemp trust organized, which may control the production and marketing of all the hemp produced in the islands, and the conditions would seem to be favor-I met able for such an organization. before I left Manila an American who was just starting for New York for this purpose. The facts in favor of the suc cess of such a trust are that hemp can be raised nowhere outside the Philip-pines, and also that the business is already in such few hands that it might easily be consolidated or so manipulat-ed that the exporters could be forced into the combination. This man told me that many of the hemp planters are in debt, and he seemed to have little doubt of his success in the organization of a possible syndicate. As to the facts, however, I am not sure, and the large amount of undeveloped territory would lead to the successful to the successful to the lead to the supposition that such a trust might be a failure in the development which will probably come through the American occupation. At present no systematic combination of hemp planters has been organized. The business is



the best hemp districts, yielding more than six million pounds of the stuff annually. A great deal of it is produced in Cebu, and a limited quantity on this island of Mindanao. Some of the finest hemp grown comes from here, and there are thousands of acres, I might also say millions of acres, which could be turned to hemp raising

Capyrighted, 1900, by Frank G. Capter-

islands could furnish gallows enough to

hang the whole human race. Their

chief product is hemp, and they sell

about eighteen million silver dollars'

worth of it every year. You see hemp

spread out to dry in the streets of the

principal towns. It is carried in from

the country on buffalo carts or on the

backs of the men, and many a petty

Chinese merchant has made his fortune

by dealing in it. We pay every year

several million dollars for the Manila

hemp which we use. It is sent to New

York, Boston and other cities, and there

made into all kinds of rope, from

clothes lines to cables. A vast deal of

it goes to the Northwest to make bind-

ing twine for harvesting. Some of it is employed in our gold, silver and iron

mines, and the finer qualities are mixed

with silk and used in weaving. It is

made into hammocks. It is used for

nets and in Paris it goes into making

of hats, tapestry and carpets. From

the waste and old ropes Manila wrap-ping paper is made, and here in the

Philippines the finest of the fiber mixed

with the threads of the pineapple, is woven into an exquisite stuff known

as Jusi cloth, which the American la-

dies buy for party dresses and which

is commonly used by the richer of our

There are thousands of men in these

islands who live off the hemp industry,

and there are merchants here who have

made fortunes out of shipping the prod-

uct abroad. Some of the best oppor-

tunities for fortune making in the

Philippines are in planting and raising

hemp, and in the future there will be

many Americans engaged in the dif-

WHERE THE HEMP COMES FROM.

I find that the hemp plant grows in

There are provinces in Luzon

When the ports of the eastern

nearly every one of the Philippine isl-

which are supported almost entirely by

it, and the islands of Leyte and Samar

raise thousands of bales of it every

part of the Philippines were opened up,

about a hundred thousand bales were

found there ready for shipment, and to-day there are steamers loaded with

The province of Albay, which is in the

southeastern part of Luzon, is one of

them going out from the Philippines.

ferent branches of the industry.

Filipino sisters.

ands.

year.

ter. Davao, May 1.-The Philippine

From inquiries which I have made from people interested in the subject, the available territory has hardly been touched, and the product might be made ten times as large as it is. So far the Philippine islands are the only place in the world where the hemp plant has Attempts been successfully grown. have been made to raise it in India and elsewhere, but so far none has succeed-

VISIT TO A HEMP PLANTATION.

I spent this morning going through one of the largest of the hemp plantations of Mindanao. If you have ever seen a banana grove you can imagine how the plantation looks. The hemp plant or abaca, as it is here called, is the Musa Textilis, a species of the same family as the edible banana, whose botanical name is the Musa Paradisalca. A hemp tree looks just like a banana tree. It is more of a plant than a tree. sprouting up from the ground to a height of from twenty to twenty-five feet, composed of many leaves wrapped round and round about a central stalk, which, when the plant is full grown, towers high in the air above you. The outer leaves are each a foot wide, and ten feet or more long. As they grow upward they branch out from the stalk, shading the ground. The hemp comes from the inner leaves, which are tightly | he wraps the fiber about a stick in or-

HARVESTING THE CROP.

Hemp farming, in fact, seems to me the softest and easiest kind of agricul ture I have yet met with. A planta tion once started, its owner is practically independent, and if his farm is big enough he can lie back in his easy chair and spend his time counting his shekels. The harvesting is chiefly done on the shares, the harvesters receiving

half the crop. The hands work in couples, two men going together into the plantation to cut down the plants and prepare the stuff for the market. They do this in the crudest and simplest way. One man cuts down the stalk, chops off the op and strips off its outer leaves. He has now a white pole five or six inches thick and from six to ten feet long. This is made of a soft central core and a number of white leaves which run the full length of the stalk. These leaves contain the fiber known as hemp. The man strips the leaves off one by one from the core, and throwing them over

his shoulders carries them to his part. er, who does what we call the strip-

The fiber is on the outside of the leaf. he inside being made up of a pulp which must be squeezed out before the hemp is ready for use. This is done by drawing the leaves one by one under a knife which rests upon a log in such a way that the juice and pulp are, scraped out and only the fiber is left. The knife is fastened to a treadle upon which the man puts his foot, forcing it down tight upon the leaf and pressing it against the log. As he pulls it

river with poles Some of the warehouses are enormous.

The one I visited had more than a mildollars' worth of produce of one kind or another stored away in it. - It was a great white two-story building. covering almost an acre, situated on the banks of the Pasig river, not far from the bay, and at the lower end of that section of Manila called Binondo. Cascoes and ships loaded with tobacco and hemp lay before it and bales of hemp were being carried out of and into it by half-naked Chinese coolies. The coolies were laboring in pairs, each pair car-rying a bale in a rattan sling upon a pole which rested upon their shoulders. In front of the warehouse a quantity of hemp was spread out under the sun to dry and inside of it were stacks and bales of this stuff, half filling the great room from floor to ceiling.

STRANGE METHODS FOR THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

I went inside and watched the baling and sorting of the hemp for shipment. It was indeed a strange sight for the d of this century of invention and progress. Everything was done by hand. About fifty Filipinos were at work tearing the bales apart and sorting the stuff, which looked like strands and twists of silvery white hair, but which was really great hanks of hemp. From time to time the men would car y a great bundle of these hanks and pile it up on a platform until they had as much as an ordinary mule cart would hold. They would weigh this upon immense steelyards which hung machinery used in its extraction, but from the roof, adding or subtracting so far all attempts to improve upon the

Hemp raising is not like sugar raising in that it needs a large capital. man must, it is true, have enough to support himself for the three years required to bring the plants into bearing, but after that an outlay of a few dollars will furnish him with all the machinery he needs, and he can, as I have said, as far as labor is concerned, run his plantation on shares. Even if he pays for his labor he will not give his hands more than 15 or 20 cents a day. In Manila, where wages are at their top notch, the manager of the largest hemp, warehouse told me he was paying amounts equal to 25 to 40 cents gold, and he evidently thought these rates exceedingly high.

PROFITS IN HEMP RAISING.

It seems to me that hemp raising will, after matters are settled, form one of the best openings for American capital. It is estimated that about 720 plants can be set out to the acre. I am told the plants can be bought for about 1 cent apiece. Each plant should produce about ten ounces of fiber, and if scien-tifically treated it might be made to produce more. Two men can, it is said, harvest about 200 pounds in a week, and this at present rates would be worth about \$50 (silver). I cannot give the details, but I have been told by a number of planters that from 25 to 30 per cent is not an uncommon profit, and that if care is used in gathering the

crop the profits might be still larger. At present a great deal of the hemp goes to waste, on account of the rude machinery used in its extraction, but

estates being owned by the friars. reached Hart dared Wesson to ride the structure, supposing they could go be-tween the rails. When it was found that the outside coping was the only place available, he tried to back out, but Wesson laughed at him and wagered \$5 that he dared not ride it Thereupon he started across on his wheel, Wesson following. Down in the valley a breathless crowd watched the exploit, for the slightest wabble would have dashed both to their death or an approaching train would have shaken them off. They arrived at the other side, however, both in a cold sweat and bad ly scared. They declared that all the gold in the country could not induce them to repeat the performance.--New York Sun.

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