

[From the London Illustrated News.]
PANAMA HATS.

Behind the principal chain of the Andes extends, on the banks of the Ucayale and the Marañon, an immense plain inclined to the east, traversed by mountain ranges, and which is called in Peru the Montana Real. Under a rainy sky, which is often disturbed by thunder storms, the eternal verdure of the primordial forests charms the eye of the traveler, whilst the inundations, the marshes, the enormous serpents, the innumerable insects, arrest his hesitating march. This region, through which the communications are difficult, is called Lower Peru.

There grow, in all the luxuriance of a limited vegetation, the most beautiful and gigantic plants, the loveliest and most odorous flowers, the most useful shrubs, the herbs the richest, both as to production and value many of which are unknown in Europe, though eminently appreciated in the country itself. In Lower Peru grows the *bombonaxa*, or hat straw, resembling so as to form a tuft of marsh reeds. The color is a delicate green. The hats called Panama hats, and made from the *bombonaxa*, have received the name they bear from having first been imported from Panama into the United States. In truth, however, the *bombonaxa* hats are exported from nearly the whole South American coast. Certain classes of Indians devote themselves exclusively to the making of the hats. The process is a very long one, and this is one reason why the price of these hats is so high. The minute, delicate labor is longer or shorter according to the quality; for whilst common articles demand scarcely more than two or three days, those of the best description require entire months of care and attention.

The plaiting of these hats occupies the whole of the Indian colony of Moyobamba, on the banks of the Amazon, to the north of Lower Peru. In this village men and women, children and old men, are equally busy. The inhabitants are all seen seated before their cottages, plaiting hats and smoking cigarettes. The straw is plaited on a thick piece of wood, which the workman holds between his knees. The centre is begun first, and he work continued outward to the rim. The time the most favorable for this kind of work is the morning or rainy days, when the atmosphere is saturated with moisture. At noon, or when the weather is clear and dry, the straw is apt to break, and these breaking appear in the form of knots when the work is done.

The leaves of the *bombonaxa*, to be fit to be used, are gathered before their complete development. They are steeped in hot water until they become white. When this operation is terminated, each plant is separately dried in a chamber where a high temperature is kept up. The *bombonaxa* is then beached for two or three days. The straw thus prepared is despatched to all the places where the inhabitants occupy themselves with plaiting hats; and the Indians of Peru employ the straw not only for hats, but also in making those delicious little cigar cases, which are often sold for \$5 or \$10 each.

When an Indian has made a dozen or so of these hats, he sets out for the residence of a dealer in the article, and generally arrives in the evening. Nothing is more curious than to see the cunning Indian, his merchandise hid under the folds of his poncho, advancing toward the house of the supposed purchaser, waiting without stirring, and looking at the door in silence. When the dealer examines a hat which the Indian has shown him, the latter asks an enormous price, which is generally three times the value of the article, and when, after a long discussion, he at last decides to conclude a bargain, one sees him examining with distrust the money which he has received, and rubbing it in order to try whether it is good. If the sellers of the hats are to the number of two or three, he who concludes the bargain passes to the others the sum paid, in order that they may also see whether it is honest money. If the money pleases them the first man draws from his inexhaustible poncho a second, a third, or a twentieth hat, as a conjuror draws every variety of articles from a hat; and for each of the "Panamas" the same scene of distrust is renewed, for the verification of the money.

We can easily understand the slowness which results from this mode of sale. It is difficult to buy more than twenty hats a day, even in giving the best price. Thus, in order to collect 2,000 hats, representing a value of \$10,000, a sojourn of three or four months in the country is required; and as transactions with savages, such as those in Lower Peru, are difficult, dealers are obliged to carry about with them both the money and the merchandise. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the trade in hats is one of the surest and most lucrative in the land.

Moyobamba exports every year ten or eleven thousand hats. The province of Panama produces much more than Peru. It is supposed that not less than sixty or eighty thousand hats are annually exported from the province of Panama. If the average price of a hat is reckoned at two pence, their exportation will represent a value of about £40,000. The greater part of the hats are exported from Lima; but of late years the exportation has likewise taken place by way of the Amazon.

Hitherto the high price of the Panama hats has hindered their transportation into Europe. As the average price of the hat has fallen to about £1, they are now within the reach of nearly every one. The Panamas are distinguished from all other hats in being in a single piece, marvellously light, and of incomparable elasticity. They can be rolled and put in the pocket without any danger of being broken. In

rainy weather they become black, but they recover their natural color when steeped in soapy water.

What constitutes and maintains the reputation of the Panama hat is, that neither heat nor insects, which devour everything under the torrid sun of the equator, can effect the *bombonaxa* straw. In the long run nothing but humidity can destroy them. They last eight times as long as a Leghorn hat. They are easily carried about. They can be folded and rolled by the dozen, like the commonest merchandise. In short, the trade in Panama hats is the very best in South America, and it would be easy to establish it in Algeria, in the West Indies, and in Guiana.

There has been an importation into France of Panama hats not more than two years. The importation into England has just begun; but it is sure greatly to extend.

GRINDING AN AXE.

"When I was a little boy, said Dr. Franklin, I remember one cold winter morning, I was accosted by a smiling man with an axe on his shoulder."

"My pretty boy," said he, "has your father got a grindstone?"

"Yes, sir," said I.

"You are a fine little fellow," said he, "will you let me grind my axe on it?"

Pleased with the compliment of 'fine little fellow,' I answered.

"It's down in the shop."

"And will you my little fellow," said he patting me on the shoulder, "get me some hot water?"

Could I refuse? I ran and brought a kettle full.

"How old are you and what's your name?" continued he without waiting for a reply; "I am sure you are the finest little fellow that I ever saw; will you turn a few minutes for me?"

Ticked at the flattery, like a fool I went to work, and bitterly did I rue the day. It was a new axe, and I tugged till I was almost tired to death; the school-bell rang, and I could not get away; my hands were blistered, the axe was sharpened and the man turned to me with.

"Now, you rascal, you've played t'unt; send to school or you will rue it."

Alas! thought I, its hard enough to turn the grindstone this cold day, but to be called a rascal was too much. It sunk deep in my mind, and often I have thought of it since. When I see a merchant over polite to his customers, begging them to take a little brandy—that man has an axe to grind. When I see a man flattering the people, making great profession of attachment to liberty, methinks, look out, good people, that fellow would set you turning a grindstone. When I see a man hoisted into an office by party spirit, without a single qualification to render him respectable or useful, alas! deluded people you are doomed for a season to turn the grindstone for a booby.

MAKING A NEEDLE.

Needles are made of steel wire. The wire is first cut by shears, from coils, into the length of the needles to be made. After a batch of such bits of wire have been cut off, they are placed in a hot furnace and then taken out and rolled backwards and forwards on a table until they are straight. They are now to be ground.

The needle-pointers takes two dozen or so of the wires and rolls them up between his thumb and fingers, with their ends on the grindstone, first on one end and then on the other. Next is a machine which flattens and gutters the heads of ten thousand needles in an hour. Next comes the punching of the eyes, by a boy, so fast that the eye can hardly keep pace with him. The splitting follows, which is running a fine wire through a dozen perhaps of these twin needles. A woman with a little anvil before her, files between the heads and separates them.

They are now complete needles, but they are rough rusty and easily bent. The hardening comes next. They are heated in batches in a furnace, and when red hot are thrown into a pan of cold water. Next they must be tempered, and that is done by rolling them backwards and forwards on a hot metal plate. On a very coarse cloth needles are spread to the number of forty or fifty thousand. Emery dust is strewn over them; oil is sprinkled and soft soap daubed over; the cloth is rolled hard up, and with several others of the same kind, thrown into a sort of a wash pot, to roll to and fro twelve hours or more. They come out dirty enough, but after a rinsing in clean hot water, and tossing in sawdust, they become bright, and are ready to be sorted and put up for sale.

ANOTHER INSTRUMENT OF DEATH.—A cannon has recently been exhibited in New York, called the Rafael Repeater, in which a slide containing sixteen loaded chambers is made to pass by simple machinery before the barrel, when it is discharged. The sixteen shots can be accurately fired in four seconds, or at the rate of 240 a minute. About eight men are required to load and fire 1,000 shots in ten minutes.

WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE SOLDIERS?—The President says he can't tell what has become of many of the men who composed the army of the Potomac. Only half of them are now in condition to be accounted for, while in the armies of Buell, Burnside, Mitchell, and other Generals, every man is accounted for. They appear to be gone, but whither, "no one knows, nor can tell."—[Traveller.

STRENGTH OF THE CONFEDERATE ARMY.

The Washington Star of a recent date, publishes the following:

"From the South we have the following data in relation to the strength of the Confederate forces from the date of the Confederate retreat from Manassas:—Our informant states that Gen. Johnson left Manassas with 40,000 effective men. Gen. Mogruder left Yorktown with 7,500 effective men, when the Union army landed. The Confederates, acting under the advice of Gen. Lee, left Yorktown with 67,000 men. On June 1st, 85,000 rations were issued to the Confederate army before Richmond. Detailed reports, by regiments, and battalion; of all but seventeen captains, showed that 6,357 soldiers were placed hors du combat, in the battle of Seven Pines. On June 21st, 128,000 rations were issued to the rebel army before Richmond. By July 28th, 33,000 new troops had reached Richmond from the South; most of whom were new levies, and not regarded as thoroughly safe. On the 13th of Aug. there were six regiments of infantry at Savannah, and a force of 34,000 near Charleston. Gen. Lee and staff left Richmond Head-quarters, (Tabb's farm, Nine Mile Road,) for Gordonsville, after telegraphing to Gen. Mercer, at Savannah, for the infantry at that post, and to Gen. Pemberton, for as many as could be spared from the defense of Charleston. Deduct from 128,000, on June 20th, 10,000 for double rations and followers, which would leave 118,000. Losses in battles of Richmond say 15,000. Number remaining, 103,000, to which add new troops 30,000, and deduct therefrom 20,000 for the defense of Richmond, would make the Confederate army of Virginia opposite our lines to number 113,000 effective men."

THE UNION ARMY.

The series of orders from the War department, require an army to be raised of 600,000 men, and in addition thereto that all the old regiments must also be filled up. What number of men may be needed for this purpose, we are unable to state, but probably not less than 200,000. The number of men now in the service is not less than 400,000. To these add the 200,000 to fill up the ranks, and to all these the two 300,000 installments, and we have an army of 1,200,000 men!

Of this number Iowa is called upon to furnish, on the two 300,000 installments and her quota to fill old regiments, the snug little number of 29,145 men.

What an army thus looms up! Who can estimate the labor they might perform, the rations they must draw, and the expense necessary to keep them for a year?

Such a vast army, properly commanded, armed and equipped, ought to crush any rebellion.—[Bugle, of Sept. 3.

MANUFACTURING SHOT IN DUBUQUE.—The Dubuque shot tower was purchased and closed up by a St. Louis house, a short time since, in order to remove its competition, and an immediate rise in the price of shot followed. The citizens of Dubuque were much incensed by the operation, and proceeded to ascertain whether they could manufacture shot by dropping metal down the deserted lead mine shafts. The results of the first attempts were of a highly gratifying nature. The Dubuque Times says:

"Experiments are daily being tried in the way of making shot by dropping it down mineral shafts, and with still more satisfactory results than at first. It is rumored that one of our citizens (Mr. Hull) intends to embark in the enterprise immediately. It turns out that this method of making shot has been pursued with success for many years in Germany, and to some extent in Missouri, so the problem may be considered solved, that there is no necessity of building \$15,000 towers when a hole in the ground with an expenditure of \$500 will do as well."—[Iowa Paper.

DON'T DRINK MUCH WATER.—A person in good health, and in the moderate pursuit of business, does not feel like drinking water, even in summer time, if not very thirsty. In fact, great habitual thirst in summer is the sign of a depraved appetite, resulting from bad habits; or it is a proof of internal fever; and the indulgence of even so simple a thing as drinking cold water largely in summer time, especially in the early part of the day, will produce a disordered condition of the system.

Most persons have experienced more or less discomfort from drinking largely of cold water. If we drink a great deal; this perspiration induces a greater evaporation of heat from the surface than some have to spare; the result is a chill, then comes the reaction of fever.

Many a person arises from the dinner or tea-table, in June, chilly, because too much cold fluids have been taken. Those who drink little or nothing, even of cold water, in summer, till the afternoon, will be more vigorous, more full of health, and much more free from bodily discomfort, than those who place no restraint on their potations.—[Dr. W. W. Hall.

PATRIOTIC.—Thirty-three young ladies of the town of Warren, Trumbull County, Ohio, publish a card in a late number of the Western Reserve Chronicle promising to take the places of the clerks in the dry goods stores of that town if they will improve the present opportunity of serving their country in the capacity of soldiers. They moreover agree to peacefully quit when the young men honorably return. A pretty strong hint, that.

"KICKED."

Poetically speaking, "to kick" means "to dun," with the hatters of Connecticut.

An old, hasty, crabbed, nervous hat manufacturer of the village of B—, whom we'll call Mr. Poke, engaged a green extract of the country as an apprentice in his factory. At the end of the first month, the young man stood in need of funds; but not knowing the least improved way of getting them, he opened his heart to a fellow worker.

"Kick the boss, then," was that worthy's matter-of-fact reply.

"Kick the boss?" repeated greeny, in astonishment. "Is that the way you do it?" He was solemnly reassured it was.

"Kick him, is it?" muttered the enraptured Josh, as he started in quest of his employer. "By hokey, I'll do it strong, and no mistake."

One glance at his hoof would have immediately impressed a skeptically inclined person with the truth of his assertion.

Going into the back yard an hour or so afterward, he caught sight of the long-looked-for boss, in the act of bending over to pick up something. If there was any kicking to be done, now was the time to do it. So, marching up to the unconscious man, with the air of a person about to do a magnanimous act, he drew back his foot, and, with all his strength of body and purpose, let drive at the stooping gent's rear. The concussion was heart-rending. The something about to be picked up disappeared to be heard of no more, while the venerable Mr. Poke shot a-head with appalling velocity.

Any one can easily imagine the novel sensation experienced by Mr. Poke when he received the shock. He picked himself up, shook his fist in the astonished Joshua's dirty face, and emitted a streak of blue light from his mouth, and small pieces of flame from his eyes.

Joshua was not only amazed but crestfallen. He thought he had done the business poorly; made many apologies, and considerably offered to repeat the dose, at the same time assuring his master that, in his private judgment, a second trial would tend much to his improvement in that line.

Strange to relate, his master disrespectfully declined his services, and stranger yet, would have proceeded to more violent measures, had not several workmen, attracted by the noise, made their appearance and explained matters to the entire satisfaction of Joshua; and so quiet again reigned.

A MIRACLE OF HONESTY.—At a party one evening, several contested the honor of having done the most extraordinary thing; a Reverend gentleman was appointed sole judge of their respective pretensions.

One produced his tailor's bill, with a receipt attached to it. A buzz went through the room that this could not be undone, when a second proved that he had just arrested his tailor for money that was lent him.

"The palm is his," was the generous cry, when a third put in his claim.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I cannot boast of the feats of my predecessors, but I have returned the owners two umbrellas that they left at our house."

"I'll hear no more!" cried the astonished arbitrator. "This is the very acme of honesty; it is an act of virtue of which I never knew any one capable. The prize!"

"Hold!" cried another. "I have done still more than that."

"Impossible!" cried the whole company.—"Let us hear."

"I've been taking my paper for twenty years, and paid for it every year in advance." He took the prize.

WHAT IS IN A NAME?—There is a confounded deal in a name. You are at a public dinner. Smith, the grocer, says, "Rice is down again." "Is Rice down again?" asks a minister; "I am sorry to hear it. I was in hopes he had permanently reformed." "I was speaking of rice the vegetable," replies the grocer. "Oh, ah, indeed?" exclaimed the minister, "and I was speaking of Rice the animal." "Wool has advanced," says a dealer in that article. "Has he?" asks a military man; "which way is he marching now?" "I was speaking of the wool of the sheep," is his reply. "I beg your pardon; I supposed you were speaking of Wool, the man." "What is butter worth?" asks some one of the grocers. "Butterworth is a Hard Shell Democrat," at once responded a politician, whose thoughts were wholly engrossed in the coming election. This confounding of names and things is endless, and sometimes is very annoying.

While Buchanan was President, the Pottstown Bank came into existence, and out of compliment to him the notes contained his portrait. But of late the Bank has received so many mutilated notes, with the words "traitor," "Judas Iscariot," etc., inscribed under the portrait, that it has resolved to call in all the notes bearing the likeness and re-issue new ones. It must be done to abate a nuisance.—[New York Sun.

NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE.—A certain Judge was once obliged to sleep with an Irishman in a crowded hotel, when the following conversation ensued: "Pat you would have remained a long time in the old country before you could have slept with a Judge, would you not?" "Yes, yer honor," said Pat; "and I think yer honor would have been a long time in the old country before ye'd been a Judge, too."