

The owner of the smacks writes that for most purposes he finds it wear quite equal to Manilla, as it does not pull out or become "long-jawed."

In June I sent to Mr. Nickels, F.C.S., a sample of flax as imported, and a sample of flax after it had been subjected to the treatment by the process. I did not inform him what had been done to these samples, but numbered them No. 1 and No. 2. The report he gave as follows:—

No. 1. "The fibre appears to be perished. It is very weak and is covered with gum. This gum readily dissolved on being submitted for some days to the action of water (the common retting process) but when the gum was removed the fibre remained harsh, was easily broken, and did not become cottonized. The retting process would not have dissolved the gum readily, if at all, had not the leaf been broken previously."

No. 2. "Had undergone some treatment which seemed to have removed the larger portion of the gum, the quantity left in it not being sufficient to cause any deleterious effect by fermentation. This fibre was submitted to the action of water same as No. 1. The whole of the fibre became freely cottonized, did not show any signs of weakness, was soft, and ready for use by manufacturers."

He gave an additional detailed account, which it is not necessary to repeat, although it led me to the conclusion the process is valuable for cleansing the *Phormium tenax*. After many attempts to get more rope made I at last induced the well-known firm of ropemakers, Frost Brothers, to promise to accede to my request, but they required not less than one ton. I therefore purchased two tons of fibre as imported, and, after dressing it, sent it to them; they spoke in the highest manner of the free way in which the fibre passed over the spinning frames. The rope I showed to several well-known shipowners, who liked its appearance so much that they readily consented to give it a trial. Messrs. Lister, Young, and Co. have taken several coils for their vessels, the "Dragon," bound to Adelaide, and the "Haddon Hall," bound to Bombay. I annex the certificate given by Captain Manning, with regard to a part used on board the former vessel in taking in her cargo. Messrs. John Willis and Sons have sent four coils in the "Lauderdale," to China, with orders that they are to be severely tried. Messrs. C. Shelton and Co. have sent two coils in the "Sheffield," to Honduras, to be used in taking in a cargo of mahogany there. Messrs. Shaw, Savill, and Co. have sent some in the "Crusader," to Canterbury, and in the "Caduceus," to Auckland; and Captain Scott, their manager, is arranging for four other coils to be despatched in other vessels. Messrs. Grinnell and Co. have taken one coil in the "Constantine," to New York.

All these gentlemen have given instructions for the captains to note carefully the manner in which the rope works and wears, so that I hope by this means to obtain various practical opinions on the real value of properly cleansed or dressed New Zealand flax.

Messrs. Frost Brothers speak most favourably of my fibre, and have given me a written report on some they are now making into rope for me. This lot was cleansed direct from the green leaf in the Canterbury Colony, under the management of Messrs. Miles and Co.; and from Messrs. Miles Brothers and Co. here I learn that this flax, which was sold on arrival in this market at £30 $\frac{1}{2}$ ton, leaves a large margin for profit.

It may be that the process for which I am the assignee may not possess any advantages over those used by others; but what I have been all along anxious to show is, that New Zealand flax can be so prepared that the reasons assigned for the prejudice against its use ought not to exist, and I think this is a fact which cannot be too widely circulated. There has been an endeavour to bring the New Zealand flax into disfavour; hence the necessity for carefully proving, by actual results, whether the faults registered against the fibre are real, or only made with a desire to depreciate the value of what, no doubt, must eventually become an important branch of New Zealand industry.

Captain MANNING to Messrs. LISTER, YOUNG, and Co.—London, 30th December, 1870.

I have to report to you that the 2½ and 3 inch rope made from the New Zealand flax has been used as burtonfalls in taking in the cargo of the "Dragon," and that on the completion of her loading I find that it is nearly as good as new and quite fit to take in another cargo, which is most unusual. It appears to stand the friction of lowering goods better than either Manilla or hemp. It could not have had a fairer trial, as during the whole of the ship's loading it has been exposed to extremes of wet, frost, and snow, which have not caused any alteration in its appearance, as it has neither swollen nor got "long-jawed;" nor has the lay of the rope been disturbed as is generally the case, more especially with Manilla; in fact, it has stood the hard work better than any rope I have ever used.

P.S.—The "Dragon's" cargo consists of about 1,200 tons weight and measurement.

Messrs. FROST BROTHERS' Report to Mr. THONE on New Zealand Flax, dressed in Canterbury, New Zealand.—11th February, 1871.

The New Zealand flax we spun for you last week is of about the same character and is no way inferior to the parcel we made up for you in December last. We spun both lots by machine, and it ran very freely, was clean and free from dirt or shives. It works much better than the ordinary New Zealand Flax. The rope made from it is soft, pliable, clean, and looks well in every respect. We have no doubt that it will wear considerably better than rope made from the usual New Zealand flax. The difference in loss of weight in manufacturing is at least 3 lbs. per cwt. in favour of your flax. We have tested the strength of the two yarns with the following results:—

Yarn spun from your superior New Zealand flax broke at 139 lbs.

Yarn spun from your New Zealand flax broke at 164 lbs.