

report by working it up. I told him if he gave me the sample I would send it to a gentleman who might be relied upon for saying what he could do, and also would do what he said he could do.

Will you kindly examine this sample very carefully, and send me your verdict upon it. Dr. Featherston has only a small quantity, say 38lbs. or 40lbs. now on hand, but shortly expects nearly a ton. It is Native-dressed. He thinks it fine enough for cambric.

What he especially wants to know is—

- (1.) Is this fibre sufficiently fine to make a yarn capable of being woven into a delicate fabric?
- (2.) If imported in large quantities, would there be a ready sale for it, and what price might be looked for, at first start?
- (3.) With what class fibre would it come into competition?
- (4.) What is the smallest quantity you could work up and get woven, so as to show the fabric of the finest kind to which it is adapted?

After all his failures in getting an interest taken in the working of this fibre, I am sure he would greatly appreciate any trouble you might take. He is quite prepared to pay all expenses attending the experiments, and would, I have no doubt, consider you have rendered him a great service.

If possible, he would feel obliged by having the report not later than the 29th instant, as it would then be in time for him to forward a copy to the New Zealand Government by the next mail.

I anxiously await the arrival of my canvas. With kind regards, &c.,

I remain, &c.,

A. K. Forbes,
30, West Keptil Street, Arbroath, N.B.

C. THORNE.

16, Mark Lane, E.C.,

London, 27th November, 1871.

MY DEAR SIR,—

This morning I received a letter from my friend Mr. A. K. Forbes, dated Arbroath, 24th November. He says he has received the sample of Native-dressed New Zealand flax.*

"I have to-night taken the sample sent to a flax-dresser, who is to dress it over a fine hackle, and let me have it to-morrow. On Monday I shall put it into a fine yarn, and send it on to you same evening, along with a letter giving my answers to your queries, till which time I shall study the thing as closely as possible. These you will receive on Wednesday morning, the 29th. You must always bear in mind that my machinery is not capable of spinning a yarn fit for making into cambric, neither is there any of that fabric woven in this country. I am not acquainted with this department of the trade, and, in giving my opinion on the fibre, can only enter into it as far as my experience goes. This is always at your command."

The next part of his letter refers to work in experiments for me, and as they will probably interest you, I subjoin the extract:—

"By this post I send you a sample hank of flax yarn, 4lbs.; this, I think, you will say is good. I am getting on pretty fair with it; still the same drawback always obtains, namely, that it does not do alone. The flax I am now spinning would have answered beautifully for a mixture with Riga, and gone into a much lighter size; still, this yarn will make a towelling and sheeting cloth. I have been experimenting on the rough tow. It is far too strong and long, and, although beat in one way, I do not mean to be beaten, and will make it into a yarn; but what I can see is, that it is not in that state to be a ready and easy manufactured fibre, being too hard and long. You must not weary over the tows getting done, as really I am oppressed with orders for tow yarns, and do not know how to get my customers supplied fast enough.

"I shall do what I can to get them pushed through as fast as I possibly can. I shall send you full reports of all my experiments in working the several lots, on the completion of the several parcels into yarn; also the bleachers and weavers as well. You may assure Dr. Featherston that I shall be happy to do anything I can to advance his views in regard to spinning the New Zealand fibre at any time, and so far as I can."

The remarks regarding cambric were drawn forth by my stating you hoped the fibre would be found fitted for so delicate a fabric as cambric.

If I receive the yarn made from the Native-dressed sample on Wednesday, as promised, I will try and bring it up to you on that afternoon: failing that, I will call upon you on my way to town on Thursday.

Yours faithfully,

C. THORNE.

Dr. Featherston,
New Zealand Government Agency.

MY DEAR SIR,—

Arbroath, 27th November, 1871.

I have now the pleasure of forwarding, by post, the New Zealand flax† spun into yarns. I had the line hand-dressed over a 12 hackle. This opened up the fibre very much, and made it beautifully soft, with the exception of the ends, which are originally hard and not nearly so well softened as the other parts. This is a great drawback to the full value of the flax, as that alone will prevent it going into a very fine yarn, which could easily be done with the other parts. I yet, however find it a very easy spun flax, and have put it into a 2lb. yarn. Even with my heavy machinery I could put it into a much smaller thread (but could not come down to a cambric size) if I had a quantity, say at least 40lbs. of line (hackled). The tow I find very good spinning fibre, and it has gone easily into a 2lb. thread. I should be quite willing to spin as much as could be sent of this quality, and I think if any of the linen-spinners in Leeds or Belfast were to try it, they could make it into a very fine Irish-linen yarn. I shall now answer your queries as well as I can:—

- (1.) After being well hand hackled, say over an 18 hackle, it would go into a linen yarn.

* Meaning *Phormium*.

† Meaning *Phormium*.