

which they bound themselves not to purchase hemp except of a specified quality as to weight, colour, &c. and arranged that in case of disagreement as to the quality of the purchasable article, the hemp should be submitted to the judgment of experts, and all the signatories bound themselves to observe the condition of the circular. The effect of this circular has already been felt in the improvement of the quality of hemp produced for export; an improvement which is likely to continue. There is a large decrease of the hemp exports to the United States and Canada, amounting to 171,613 bales, while there is an increase of export to Great Britain, Australia, China, and California. The Manila hemp is, as is well known, manufactured from the *musa textilis*, a species of banana, for which the soil and climate of the islands are favourable, as they are also to other textile plants peculiar to these islands; one of these is a species of the pineapple which produces a fine fibre from which are made extremely delicate gauze textures called *pina*, almost transparent, which is a great favourite with the natives. The export of island-made cordage has increased during the past year; the greater portion of it goes to China. There is a project afloat of establishing an English rope factory in the islands, which ought to be successful.—*Consular Report for 1893.*

### DEVICES FOR TRAPPING INSECTS, RATS, AND THIEVES.

The *Boston Journal of Commerce* has made the following extracts from patents which have been granted for trapping insects, rodents, and thieves:—

"Contrivances for catching insects are more numerous than any others. One of them is a furnace for slaughtering potato bugs. To begin with, a deep and wide furrow is to be ploughed all round an infested field; through this trench a smooth log is dragged to make the surface hard and smooth. The bugs in migrating to other grounds are unable to scale the trench, and the furnace, which is a cylinder of iron filled with fuel, is drawn along the furrow and destroys them. Other odd devices are cartridges intended to be inserted in the mouths of ant-holes, and to be fired thus communicating stifling vapours to the subterranean chambers, also many kinds of lamps for attracting and burning up the moths of various worms in cotton fields. There is a toy pistol for insects, which sucks them in when the trigger is pulled.

"An ingenious Westerner has invented a trap for catching the horn fly, which is such an enemy to cattle in some parts of the country. It consists most importantly of a great frame to which brush is attached in such a manner that when the beasts walk through, eager, as they always are to scratch themselves, the flies will be scraped from their bodies by the branches. Finally the frame is closed up by means of doors and the captured insects are destroyed. Nearly everybody has heard of the gold tapeworm trap, which the patient swallows. Bedbug traps are of several varieties, all of them being intended to afford attractive hiding places for those bloodsuckers and to be burned or scalded out afterward.

"Much ingenuity has been expended in rat traps. Some of them are so elaborate that no full-witted rodent would go near them. One requires Mr. Rat to come in through a door, which drops behind him and makes him a prisoner. Seeing a bright light above, he ascends a flight of little steps and trots across a small plank that is so nicely adjusted as to balance that his weight causes it to tip and throw him into a tank of water. Another contrivance consists of a double chamber. One chamber has a glass end through which Mr. Rat sees two or three imitation rats having a nice time with a bit of cheese. Wishing to join them, he runs around the box, gets into the other chamber and is caught.

"There are a number of devices which employ mirrors for the purpose of luring Mr. Rat to his fate. He mounts on top of a barrel and sees a toothsome bit of cheese. As he approaches it he beholds another rodent—in reality his own reflection in a piece of

looking-glass—coming for the cheese from the opposite direction. He makes a dash to get there first, and a pivoted board drops him into the caulk, which is half full of water. Rats will swim for a long time, so one humanitarian has patented a water trap with little shelves around the edge and just above the surface. On the shelves are placed small lead weights with fish-hooks hanging from them. The captured rat in trying to escape grasps one of the hooks, gets it fastened in his mouth, dislodges the piece of lead, and is carried to the bottom by the latter.

"Of greater interest are contrivances for catching thieves. One of them is designed to discourage bank sneaks. The sneak puts his hand in through the teller's window, and unintentionally actuates a mechanism which causes a slide with spikes to close suddenly upon his paw and impale it. A trap of a somewhat similar character is a steel shutter for a house window, so disguised with covering and fringes as to look like an ordinary curtain. If a burglar tries to enter at night, it shuts down upon him, the spikes hidden by the fringe helping to hold him fast." *St. James's Budget.*

### A ROUND-THE-WORLD TRIP INVESTIGATING TROPICAL AGRICULTURE.

At present there is in our midst a young gentleman, who arrived in Colombo on Monday from England, who has been travelling for some time all over the planting world, and is now on his way to India. Mr. F. Caley Smith, of Adelaide, represents the *Adelaide Register*, the *Melbourne Argus*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Auckland Herald*, and the *Pacific Rural Press* of San Francisco. The object Mr. Smith has had in view more especially is to report on the wine producing districts of the world, and by the way to investigate tropical agriculture in view of introducing the same into Australia where already a number of his friends are in the work. He has already visited the United States, Canada, the Cape, England, Germany, Italy, Syria, Egypt, etc. He considers that for scientific agriculture the Germans are before all other peoples but that the Americans are not far behind. Great Britain is entirely out of the running, many of the Colonies far outstripping her in practical agriculture. Mr. Smith intends before leaving for India to go upcountry, to Kandy and Nuwara Eliya.

### CEYLON SEASON REPORTS FOR AUGUST.

From the abstract of the Season Reports for the month ended August 31st, 1894, published in *Friday's Gazette*, we make the following extracts:—

Colombo District.—Should the present unfavourable weather continue the "nuttes" crop in Alutkuru korale south will be a poor one. Jakfruit, breadfruit, and plantains are scarce and dear. Cucumber and sugarcanes are plentiful. The coconut crop is below the average; prices vary from R30 to R40 a thousand nuts.

Alutkuru Korale North.—Vegetables are scarce and dear. Coconut crops poor; prices good.

Hapitigam korale.—During the month there was some rain, but not sufficient for cultivation purposes. Plantains are scarce and dear. For want of sufficient rain some fields have been abandoned.

Vegetables other than jak and breadfruit are plentiful and cheap in Kalutara Totumuna and Rayigam korale, but scarce in Pasdun korale. Plantains are plentiful in Kalutara Totumuna, but dear. Betel cultivation is carried on extensively in Rayigam korale. The coconut crop is fair; prices R30 to R35 a thousand. An outbreak of cattle murrain is reported from Welipenna in Pasdun-Walalawitti korale.