

# PLANTING RUBBER FOR THE MARKET

Mexico Presents One of the Best Fields in World--Harvest From Rubber Trees

## PLANTATION HEADQUARTERS

**R**ANKING with the world's greatest commercial necessities, such as iron, steel and copper, is rubber. While England, France, Germany and other European countries have been searching the most ends of the earth for localities where this commodity will grow and can be obtained in commercial quantities, the United States is just waking up to the fact that at her door is the "rubber belt" of tropical Mexico in the finest rubber growing country in the world.

This valuable article is obtained by "tapping," or cutting the trees from which the milk or latex flows. This is done by a special process and passed through a process of coagulation which consists of the separating of the rubber from the water and other ingredients with which nature mixes it. The result from this process forms the crude rubber of commerce. It is then passed through a vulcanizing process in the factories and is made into the thousand and one articles required by the trade.

There are two species of rubber tree from which the article is readily obtained in commercial quantities. The Hevea Benitiana is the Castillon Plantation. The former is a native of the Amazon basin, while the latter grows wild in Mexico and Central America. The Castillon matures at the early age of five years and can be tapped at four years and is a prolific producer. It attains a great size, up to even five and six feet in diameter, and is a tree of long life, attaining an age of 100 years.

It has been demonstrated that these trees are susceptible to cultivation and respond readily to ordinary care and is no comparison between the size of the wild and cultivated tree of the same kind. In the case of the former, the seed takes root in the dense jungle where the young plant receives no sunlight and where it is surrounded by a multitudinous mass of tropical vegetation and responds but slowly. On the other hand, the cultivated tree is carefully tended during its nursery days and is then set out in a suitably prepared clearing where it obtains an abundance of sunshine and responds very rapidly to its cultivation.

The world is and has heretofore depended upon the native gatherer for its supply. This gatherer is a native of the native Indian with no thought beyond the needs of today. The consequence is that instead of properly tapping the wild tree he finds while cutting his way through the dense jungle, he cuts down simply because he can by that means obtain all the rubber the tree has in it. This ruthless destruction of these valuable trees has been going on for four hundred years and the world is now facing a gradually increasing rubber shortage. These conditions have led to the formation of rubber plantations, which, from what might be termed experiments of a few years ago, have developed into a most important and profitable industry.

Returns from rubber plantations were first received from Ceylon and the Malay states, where a number of large English plantation companies are in general operation. All of these are joint stock corporations, their stocks being listed on the London exchange, and it is a notable fact that during the recent panic rubber shares some of them quoted as high as 10 times their par value, were the only securities that held their own and actually advanced during the general depression.

The Fiancier and Bullionist, the oldest London financial daily, has this to say about rubber shares: "Nothing succeeds like success, and consequently it is not surprising to find that persons who have had a good time back to say for rubber shares a little time back are now busily engaged in pointing out the attractions of such securities. The general information which recent results have excited in it, must be admitted, abundantly justified by the fact that no newly created or discovered industry has made such progress or has so brilliantly fulfilled the hopes of its sponsors as that of rubber cultivation. Companies which only a few years ago were virtually unknown and were a negligible quantity so far as the general investor was concerned, have since reported profits and declared dividends well calculated to make shareholders in old-fashioned orders and enterprises green with envy. Coal and iron companies, catering companies, mo-



RUBBER TREES 18 Mo. OLD.

tor manufacturing companies during the past year or so have made big profits, but the return on their capital sinks into insignificance beside that which has been the happy lot of the rubber shareholder. And yet rubber planting is, comparatively speaking, an infant industry. To what heights of prosperity it will attain when its growth is measured by decades and not by years, even the best sanguine prophet can hardly dare to say.

So rapidly has the business developed that the British government employs a staff of scientists whose duty it is to carry on experiments to determine the best methods of growing, cultivating and tapping the trees and coagulating the latex into rubber. The results are given to the planters without charge. It was through their experiments, extending over a period of four years, that the new "spiral" system of tapping was discovered. This has increased the output over the old "Y-shaped" method as five to one, or in other words, a young tree that would supply one pound under the "Y-cut" will, under the "spiral" system, produce five pounds, without the least injury to the tree.

The tapping of a rubber tree can be likened to the cutting of one's finger. The cut will bleed to a certain limit, but will then cease. A hard crust forms over the wound which eventually falls off, leaving the new skin to bark as sound as ever. The tree can be cut again and again in the identical spot.

The cultivation of this very necessary commodity in tropical Mexico is just commencing to attract the attention of thinking people in the United States. The industry has been looked upon as being of a more or less freakish nature, but it is now being regarded as far-sighted who have taken the pains to investigate and then, upon the basis of their convictions, have invested their money in the enterprise. As an experiment the industry has had its day and has now resolved itself into a permanent thing.

Up to 1906 the shipments of plantation rubber from Ceylon or the Malay States amounted to less than 200 tons, and it was this amount coming into the London market that created the "boom" world's annual consumption which in 1907 amounted to 20,000 tons. About 35,000 tons of this amount comes from the Amazon region, Mexico and Central America. The Amazon product is known to the trade as "Para rubber," and when first imported was obtained from the trees growing near the city of Para on the north mouth of the Amazon river. The wild supply is entirely dependent upon the natives and is so irregular in quantity and maximum quantity, has systematically destroyed these valuable trees for two generations. The consequence is that today the natives have to penetrate fully 3,000 miles into the interior of the Amazon country and wander around in search of rubber trees to tap.

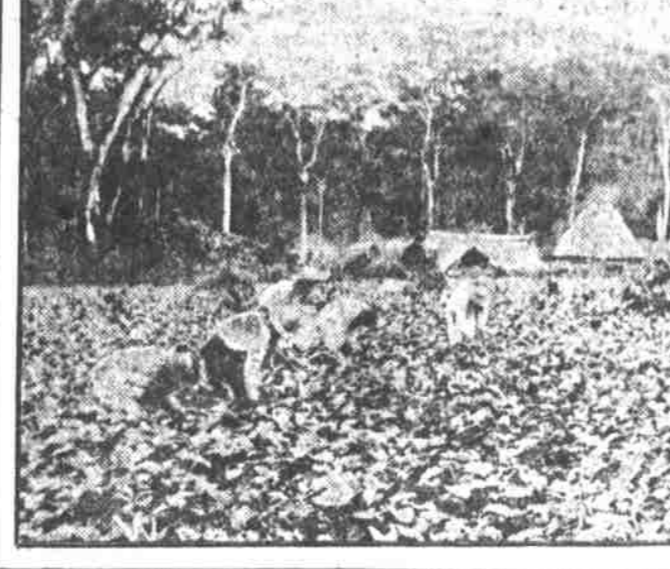
There are no inhabitants in the section referred to and the natives from the coast have to go after their supply. It has been authentically stated, and there is no question as to its truth, that every ton of rubber coming from the Amazon region costs a human life. Not only that, but it costs at least 75 cents gold per pound to get the rubber out.

The "Castillon Elastica," native of Mexico, many thousands of them of an age growing wild in the "rubber belt," is now known as the most prolific producer of rubber in the world. It is a tree of very rare importance to the owners of several millions of planted trees who have been waiting for a market that their money had not been thrown away.

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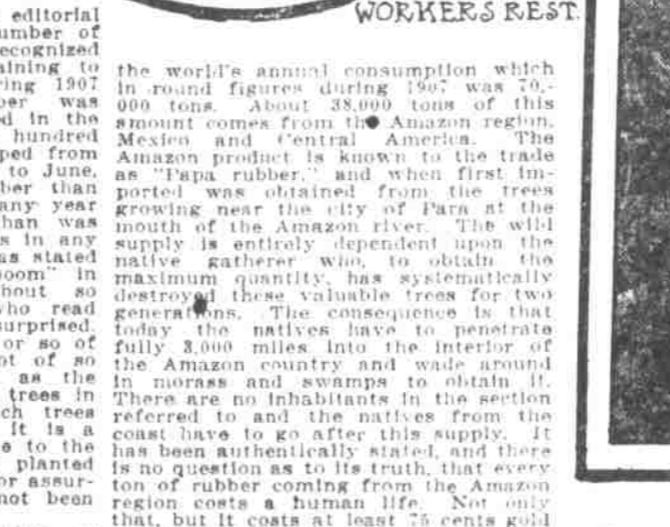
GROUP AT PLANTATION HEADQUARTERS



WEEDING NURSERY 4 MO OLD



ON A SUNDAY THE WORKERS REST



TAPPING A RUBBER TREE.



CONTRACTOR'S CAMP



RUBBER TREE FIVE YEARS OLD.



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prices. An extract from a brilliantly compiled official report on agriculture in the Malay states during 1906 says: "It has been shown over and over again that the output from every rubber plantation at present in existence, when every tree is in full bearing, cannot possibly be affected to any great extent or in any permanent manner, the regular maintenance of which by the proprietary companies should, and unquestionably will, own."

During the last ten calendar years, from 1898 to 1907 inclusive, the imports into the United States amounted to 572,360,292 pounds valued at \$3,555,510, a larger amount having been imported and consumed in Europe.

The problem presented to the manufacturer of rubber is a serious one, because he not only has to continually replace rubber articles in daily use, but has to supply the rubber for new articles which are continually being offered to the trade. An iron tire, for instance, will sometimes outlast the vehicle, but a rubber tire is of short life, and they have therefore not only to keep renewing the rubber tire while the same vehicle is in active operation, but constantly supplying new tires for the new vehicles. Hence, the demand is continually increasing while the supply is not.

It is officially stated that the supply of \$1,000,000,000 of foreign capital is invested in Mexico. Of this amount, between \$200,000,000 and \$300,000,000 is American capital. \$30,000,000 of the latter being invested in rubber culture. The owners of this vast amount of money, which has developed the republic into its present conditions of activity and business progression, have, since the outbreak of the war, been making investments which consist of various industries, such as railroads, manufacturing, electrical plants, mining and agriculture. Under our "Monroe doctrine" the United States is bound to protect this invested capital, both local and foreign, and to encourage the investment realizing its dependence upon outside capital to develop the natural resources of the republic has demonstrated its own ability to extend the same protection and promulgate impartial laws just as any of the great powers of the world protect their foreign investors.

Java has heretofore been considered the most fertile and prolific of rubber producing countries, but within recent years experts have conceded that tropical Mexico excels in fertility any other country in the world.

producing countries would be greatly curtailed. This would cause a shortage of the 38,000 tons from the Amazon region and the 30,000 tons of natural rubber above referred to, to say nothing of that from the Congo, which would make the shortage more than the present world's supply. It can, therefore, be readily seen that there is no prospect for a great many years at least of cheaper rubber, but on the other hand we may look for higher

## HUMAN NATURE STUDIES IN PORTLAND POSTOFFICE--Thousands Who Show Ins and Outs of Character While Waiting to Receive Letters From Home

**H**UMAN NATURE, with all its joys, hopes, sorrows, anticipations, and numerous other little attributes which go to make up the ways of this cruel, this kind and this un sympathetic old world, may be seen almost any hour in the corridor of Portland's postoffice. Here it is that thousands of people post their letters and receive their mail which brings them bad news and good tidings from dear ones in all parts of the world.

They, young and old, climb the steps of Uncle Sam's building in Morrison street, one after the other, all with the hope of receiving some information from a relative, a friend or a sweetheart. And going in and out all day are the girls and numerous old women, all bent on the same mission.

Perhaps some one of the family who has been away for years has not been heard from for months naturally, and such families the members become worried and more particularly the dear old mothers and old-fashioned grandmothers, all too busy—who make daily trips to the postoffice, stands in line at the general delivery window and then goes away sadly disappointed.

Many persons and families receive mail at the general delivery window for various reasons. Some have only recently moved to Portland, and inform their correspondents to address them in this way. Hundreds of others are continuously moving from one home to another, and on this account always have their mail sent care of the general delivery window. And then there are the unfortunates who have no home—no other place in the world to which they can have their letters addressed.

It is this class, principally which causes a continuous stream of persons to be bending their respective ways in and out of the postoffice all day and every night.

Some people live in the hope of receiving a letter. They anticipate and long forward with the thought that the letter will bring good news. Some imagine that from somewhere in the

world, they haven't the slightest idea where the letter will be sent. Excitively that they have fallen heir to a fortune or something equally as good will develop in their favor.

Then there is the girl with the sweet heart. Perhaps her parents object to her receiving mail from some particular man, and she writes to her sweetheart to Uncle Sam's general delivery window.

And then there are the married men and women—but the loss said about them the better.

But the look upon the faces of the waiting individuals, when entering the building is the same—that of anticipation. After applying for their mail, however, or receiving it, the faces, in most instances, change materially. Perhaps it is disappointment, perhaps it is anger, or even worse, because there is no letter. Or even worse, perhaps the letter just received has brought bad news, instead of something encouraging, as had been hoped for.

And then the recipient slowly and sadly reads the bulletin. Eventually courage returns, and the daily trips to the general delivery window are continued. The recipient is apparently happy and much relieved.

If you have an hour or two that you wish to put to good advantage you may stand around the well-worn entrance of Portland's postoffice building. This will see life—real human life. All of the little scenes and incidents will not be pleasant, perhaps, and you will sort of stick in your mind and heart for a while, but if you stay long enough you will become accustomed to it—it's life. Just common, plain, everyday life. That's all.

One daily visitor to the postoffice is an old man, aged and feeble with time. Now and then at long intervals he receives a letter, but it isn't the one that he has been looking for all these years. It is a letter from a woman, a woman who has been looking for him for years. He is known as the most regular visitor to the building.

Twenty days ago a son of the one—left Portland on a sailing vessel.

But now they were old and worn. Here they were, both in line at the general delivery window, because they had no home or any place else on earth where they could receive their mail.

They recognized each other as soon as they were called, and they looked away. The brother saw and realized that his sister had become one of the underworld. And he had never known it before. At the same time the girl saw that the boy had evidently gone wrong as there were signs of dissipation in his eyes. They talked a few minutes and left the building together. I never saw the two again, but I have often wondered.

Merrily this crowd these letter seekers, go in one door and out the other. It is the same old, old story every day in the year.

Old Uncle Sam has so many grandchildren depending and looking forward to his delivery of Aunt Sarah that his system has become the greatest in the world. The people have made of Uncle Sam and old Uncle Sam is anxious to keep them together as much as possible.

**Cupid and Spelling Reform.**

"Hands across the sea" are stretched, full many a time, I wish I were a cupid, I would provide—though Cupid goes amiss.

All our daily papers chronicle, ever and anon.

Some new alliance made abroad, with "Doris Dollars Weds a Duke"—Patronymic is De Ke. (Her papa, smiling broadly, seven millions says he'll pay).

"Belinda Banknote and Lord Locksley" (Her papa: "pay the pipe")—and five millions is the tune!

"Daisy Deuces Captures Count"—lady major goes to rack.

"Ducan Decker gives a steel plant to get the castle back."

"Pauline Packer Plights Her Troth to Prince Poormank! Busted!"

"Russetian Nobles, drunk with joy, American, disgusted."

"Gladys Goldmine Flabs His Grace"—reads another glaring head.

(And off forth with jumpy a point or two, so these two may wed.)

Forsyth, Dan Cupid surely has reform in Male in Sunny June.

He still spells bigroom finance—but finance spells the bride.

—J. K. Robinson.

## AN INTERNATIONAL FOURTH OF JULY--How Springfield, Mass., Keeps the Kids Busy With Games

**I**N ALL the clatter amid the fire and blood and tentacles of the Fourth of July, there are mighty few practical suggestions of new kinds of celebrations. Springfield, Mass., has such a suggestion—more than that, for it was tried this year, and it worked.

One of the peculiarities of Springfield's success appeared to be, so completely occupied the boys and girls as to leave a minimum of time for the devastation of life, limb and property that inevitably results from too much playing with fire. A procession of school boys, forming at 3 o'clock and marching at 3:30, followed immediately by outdoor singing and speech making with a balloon ascension at noon to finish off the morning games and took dance at the city hall and boat races beginning an hour later and lasting until it was time for band concerts and public fireworks—all this gave the boy who was set on blowing up himself or setting fire to his own or his neighbor's house, had work to employ his hands for the works of Satan. As a result the fire engines stayed in their stations and the doctors took a holiday.

While the astute committee which had the day in charge, deserves credit for its indirect life-saving work, its more significant contribution to the celebration of the day was its interesting conception of the spirit of nationality that our great American holiday might be made to express. For once the contribution to American life by the pilgrims and Puritans was put in its place, a large and important place, but not the whole, and some other and more recent contributions to our civilization were also given a place.

The various nationalities represented in the city were invited to join the procession, presenting themselves in what ever national aspect they might select. Some it responded, all in fact, except the Jews, who were obliged to decline because the Fourth fell on Saturday.

The nations came in huge floats sailing majestically up the main street. First came the Swedes in a Viking ship with sailward yellow haired rowers at the oars, the English recalled the Magna Chart, the Scotch showed their Queen Mary, preceded by bare-kneed, killed

Highlanders, swinging along with their tartan flying, blowing real bagpipes, the Irish delivered into their rannoch past and brooked a formidable Pleading for the Bar. There are some 2,000 Greeks in the city, and the men, whose mellancholy faces distinguished their bands and flower shops, arrayed in classic robes, with flowing beards, showed us Socrates, Plato, Pericles, Demosthenes, and the like, followed after them, with graceful symbolism, some young Greeks holding the stiles of a huge American flag, while other school boys carried smaller flags of their national blue and white. The adaptable Italians, eager to prove their prowess, showed their "Pasta" followed up their Michelangelo and Galileo with Marconi. The French, coming by way of Canada, with special preparations for this year, exhibited their plain in his boat on the St. Lawrence. William Tell was recalled by the Germans. The Chinese graciously provided a native orchestra and a huge barge of wonderful tapestries, but showed their personal preference by wearing American clothes and riding in hacks. The merchants from Armenia displayed themselves and their families in gorgeous, embroidered robes, and the boys followed up their Michelangelo and Galileo with Marconi. The French, coming by way of Canada, with special preparations for this year, exhibited their plain in his boat on the St. Lawrence. William Tell was recalled by the Germans. The Chinese graciously provided a native orchestra and a huge barge of wonderful tapestries, but showed their personal preference by wearing American clothes and riding in hacks. The merchants from Armenia displayed themselves and their families in gorgeous, embroidered robes, and the boys followed up their Michelangelo and Galileo with Marconi. 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