

## NEW VEGETABLE FIBRES.

Among the recently discovered vegetable fibres, useful in the manufacture of cloth of various kinds, may be mentioned those of the China grass and the Ramie, both of them species belonging to the nettle family and to the genus *Boehmeria*. The China grass, when prepared, is of a brilliant snow-white color, and of remarkable fineness of fibre. Like the fibres of cotton, those of the China grass are single cells, some of which attain a length of eight inches, those of flax being at most only four. The Ramie is of still greater value in the arts, and is now extensively cultivated in the warmer portions of the United States, principally from seeds distributed by the Agricultural Department. This plant has been grown from time immemorial by the natives of the Indian Archipelago, and from the peculiarly waterproof nature of its fibre is used largely in the manufacture of nets. The plant is perennial and easily propagated by settings, yielding three or four harvests annually. The crop is about a thousand pounds of fibre per acre, of which about half is textile material, furnishing a silky, lustrous thread, longer than that of cotton. This is spun, mixed with either wool or cotton, and can indeed be worked by itself; in which case it has the appearance of Lyons silk.