

manufacture of the fibre of the quality prescribed. The machinery must be simple, strong, durable, and cheap, and should be suited for erection at or near the plantation, as the refuse material is said to be valuable for use as a manure for continued cultivation.

The government of India will furnish, on application through its Secretary of State, a supply of carefully dried stems and specimens of the fibre separated from the bark, to all mechanical firms desirous of competing for the reward. One year from the date of the advertisement, January 11, 1870, is allowed for the preparation of the machinery and transportation to the locality where the trial is to be made.

Both the rhea grass of India and the ramie of China are derived from varieties of the *Boehmeria tenacissima*. As "ramie," the plant has been widely diffused in North America by the National Botanic Garden and the United States Agricultural Department, and much detail respecting its culture and character will be found in the valuable publications of the latter establishment. As soon as all the problems respecting its preparation are solved it will doubtless become of great economic importance in the United States; and the reward offered by the India government might not inappropriately be supplemented by another on the part of our own authorities.

RHEEA, OR CHINA GRASS.

Much attention has been directed in India toward the cultivation of the China grass, of the variety called rhea; and a large quantity has been raised in that country without its having been taken hold of to any great extent by manufacturers. The principal difficulty is understood to be the want of suitable machinery for separating the fibre and the bark from the stem, and the fibre from the bark, the expense of doing this by hand being too great for ordinary use. In view of the fact that the climate of India is especially adapted to the cultivation of this plant, the Governor-General has just announced that he has been authorized to offer a prize of \$25,000 for a machine that shall be capable of producing a ton of fibre, of a quality that shall average in value not less than \$250 per ton in the English market, at a total cost of all the processes of manufacture, and allowance for wear and tear included, of not more than \$75 per ton. This is to include all the operations performed after the cutting and transportation of the plant to the place of manufacture, and the completion of the