

THE CORDAGE AND TWINE INDUSTRIES

The cordage industry is one in which it has so far been impossible to establish a successful combination on a permanent basis. There is an association for the betterment of the industry, but no trust controls it. The National Cordage Company made an effort to bring the cordage concerns of the country together, but in 1893 the company surrendered to receivers. The United States Cordage Company two years later met the same fate as the National. So the hundred thousand tons and more of rope and binder-twine made annually in this country are produced by

independent concerns. Over ten thousand spindles are busy turning out "cord." Four thousand of these are sufficient to supply the wants of every ship flying the Stars and Stripes, to bind the harvests of the country, to furnish rope fire-escapes for the twenty thousand hotels in the Union, to tie up mountains of bundles, and to equip every back-yard in America with a clothes-line. In the olden days the length of a rope could not be greater than the length of the building or yard in which the work was done. In the factory of to-day, on a rapidly rotating machine, a single rope can be spun as long as a Pacific cable. The annual value of the product of cordage and twine in the United States is nearly \$40,000,000. Manila and sisal are the principal fibres used, the proportion of the total output of the finished product being slightly in favor of sisal.

In the twine industry, the principal department is that in which binder twine is made for agricultural uses. The great wheat farms of the West use tens of thousands of miles of this twine every season. In the great twine mill at Chicago, the largest plant of the kind in the world, the output for a day would tie a band around the globe, with several thousand miles to spare. The product for a single week would reach to the moon. The annual production would fill a train twenty miles long, or make a hammock containing nearly four hundred strands that would encircle the earth at the equator. Made into a mat two feet wide, this binder twine would reach across the American continent from ocean to ocean.