Excerpt from Phormium Tenax as a Fibrous Plant: Being Selections From the Reports of the Commissioners Appointed by the New Zealand Government 1870 to 1872 The history of what is usually termed the Flax Industry in New Zealand, affords a remarkable instance of the difficulty experienced in developing the natural resources of a country, if the commodities to be disposed of have not a previously established market value. When the colonists first arrived in New Zealand, the valuable qualities of the Phormium fibre were well known, as it was in constant use by the Natives, and a very considerable trade in the article existed as early as 1828, when the islands were only visited by whalers and Sydney traders, as 50,000 worth of the fibre was sold in Sydney alone between 1828 and 1832. At Grimsby, in Lincolnshire, a manufactory was also established in the latter year for the production of articles from New Zealand fibre, which failed from some unexplained cause, notwithstanding that, the results were not considered at the time unsatisfactory. From that period up to 1853, the statistics on this subject are very imperfect, but show that a fluctuating trade in the Native dressed fibre was maintained. At the same time many attempts were made in the colony to discover a more speedy and profitable method of preparation. Thus in 1844, a company was formed in England that sent out hand machines and a staff of workmen to the Province of Nelson. The machines proved unsuitable for the purpose, and the enterprise failed. Other machines were then tried, and thousands of pounds were spent in fruitless experiments, simply because the fibre produced did not resemble sufficiently any kind already established in the market, while on the other hand it was not prepared in sufficient quantity to create a position for itself. From 1853 to 1860 the average annual value of the fibre exported was nearly 2,500, reaching as high as 5,500 in 1855, but up to this time the only fibre exported was that prepared by Native labour, no machinery of any kind being employed in producing the exported article. About the Publisher Forgotten Books publishes hundreds of thousands of rare and classic books. Find more at www.forgottenbooks.com This book is a reproduction of an important historical work. Forgotten Books uses state-of-the-art technology to digitally reconstruct the work, preserving the original format whilst repairing imperfections present in the aged copy. In rare cases, an imperfection in the original, such as a blemish or missing page, may be replicated in our edition. We do, however, repair the vast majority of imperfections successfully any imperfections that remain are intentionally left to preserve the state of such historical works.

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