

the wooden rims. I do not know why, for I think climatic conditions have little to do with it. Any kind of bicycle, if kept clean and in good order, will stand the climate very well.

"Double-tube tires seem to be preferred, though there is no motive apparent, except that they are the fashion; and, as turned out by German firms, cheap—likewise worthless.

"In my opinion, the kind of wheel it would best pay to push would be a good medium grade. It is hardly worth while just yet to try to sell the very best, as few people are willing to pay the prices. On the other hand, in the very cheap grades it is useless, as well as bad policy, to attempt to compete with the Germans. Let goods be well made and honest, and, if properly pushed, they will surely find a market in an island where the roads are perfect and where there are 40,000 Europeans and hundreds of thousands of Chinese."

PAINTS IN SIAM.

The French Minister at Bangkok says there is a somewhat considerable trade in colors for paints in Siam, where most of the buildings are of wood, but the Customs statistics do not permit of the extent of the imports being stated. Oil paints are the most important, and of these the consumption in recent years has greatly extended, owing to the building operations which have been carried out. The colors most generally employed are zinc white and white lead, the very heavy sales of these two products being explained by the fact that there is not an apartment in Bangkok into the painting of which they do not enter largely. Other colors which find a ready sale are greens, blues, browns, yellows, reds—varnishable red in particular, red lead, Sienna earths, and red and yellow Italian earths. Most of these are sent to Bangkok in the form of paint; but often the colors are mixed locally with linseed oil and spirits of turpentine, this being the most advantageous mode of procedure. In either case, most of the imports are from England. "That country has supplied Siam so long, and the use of English colors has become so habitual, that it is difficult to secure the acceptance of others without complying with the English taste, and the conditions as to price and consignment in use with the English."

TIN-PLATE WARE.

Tin-plate basins, of 30 cm., cost at Benguela 15,000 reis per gross; plates called "improved plain tin soup plates," of eight inch (20 cm.), cost 8,500 reis per gross at Benguela. It is to be remarked, however, that the natives are displaying a tendency to abandon the use of tin-plate goods in favor of those made of enamelled iron.—Belgian Vice-Consul at Mossamedes.

BELGIAN IMPORTS.

In his annual report Consul-General Lincoln, of Antwerp, says:

"In connection with a consideration of the subject of Belgian imports, the figures given in regard to the following articles will be found of interest.

"The quantity of starch and nonedible farinaceous substances exported from the United States into Belgium during the first six months of 1898 was 5,206,253 pounds, as against 2,608,462 pounds in the first six months of 1897, and 169,973 pounds in the first six months of 1896.

"The importations of certain kinds of timber from the United States increased in a notable manner during the first six months of 1898. Thus the imports of oak and walnut boards for the first six months of 1898 were 1,830 cubic feet, as against 961 feet in 1897. The increase in the import of sawed oak and walnut for the same period of time was also notable, the figures in 1898 being 104,546 cubic feet, as against 66,190 cubic feet in 1897.

"Belgian wheat imports for the first six months of 1898 from the United States were 292,582,000 pounds, as against 143,584,570 pounds for the corresponding period in 1897. The amount of the import of rye for the first six months of

1898 was 86,198,510 pounds, as against 25,368,797 pounds for the first six months of 1897, and 16,868,496 pounds for 1896, a very notable increase. The import of wheat flour for the first six months of 1898 was 2,555,018 pounds, against 882,803 pounds for the corresponding period of 1897.

"The import figures for malt were 1,024,711 pounds during the first six months of 1898, against 495,007 pounds in 1897, a notable increase.

"One of the most notable increases in imports from the United States is lard, the importation of which for the first six months of 1898 amounted to 18,543,477 pounds, against 7,568,431 pounds in the corresponding half-year of 1897. The increase in the importation of other animal substances, such as fish and fat other than lard, is also noteworthy, the import being twice as large in the first six months of 1898 as in 1897, the figures being 3,379,468 pounds for 1898 and 1,551,694 pounds for 1897.

"The import. of canned fish, tobacco, wood for dyeing purposes, smoked ham, tongue and lard show notable increases."

LABOR-SAVING DEVICES IN CHINA.

In reply to an export association in New York, Consul-General Goodnow, of Shanghai, writes as follows:

"I cannot give you any encouragement in regard to the shipment of wheelbarrows, scrapers, dump cars, and the like to China. The wheelbarrow used here has one large wheel in the middle and a seat on either side, where passengers or loads are carried. Once in a great while, dirt is carried in baskets on such a barrow, but ordinarily it is carried by a coolie in two baskets hung on the end of a bamboo rod balanced on his shoulders. These baskets are about the size and shape of a grain scoop. Labor-saving devices are not in demand in China. The cheapest thing here is a man. There is more labor than can find employment. A coolie carrying dirt will receive from seven to ten cents gold per day. He must work from sunrise to sunset—not very steadily or very intensely, but putting in a great many hours and accomplishing a large amount of work for the amount of wages paid. There are more coolies willing to work for this pittance than there is work for them to do."

DEVELOPMENT OF THE KONGO FREE STATE.

The recent celebration by the city of Antwerp of the progress of the Kongo Free State, has attracted wide attention. In his speech on that occasion, the king, after calling attention to the enormous difficulties in the way of commercial development in Africa, spoke of the remarkable advance in trade made by the Kongo during the last few years, although the railway connection with the interior navigable waters of that territory was completed only last July. The importations, from 7,500,000 francs (\$1,447,500) in 1893, increased to 22,000,000 francs (\$4,246,000) in 1897, of which more than 16,000,000 francs (\$3,088,000) worth came from Belgium. The exportations increased from 5,500,000 francs (\$1,061,500) in 1893 to more than 15,000,000 francs (\$2,895,000) in 1897, of which 13,000,000 francs (\$2,509,000) was sent to Belgium. The king spoke of the probability that the railway now finished and others to be constructed would increase this commerce at an even greater ratio. The Government policy in regard to the Kongo, he said, would be to keep it an absolutely neutral power, as Belgium has been; to imitate Germany in the formation of numerous export associations; to encourage by all means, private and official, the establishment of centres of trade in Africa.

THRESHING MACHINES IN RUSSIA.

There is a good demand for horse-power threshing machines of improved construction, fitted with straw shakers, riddle and corn screen and automatic feeder. These machines are much in favor with the peasant proprietors and German colonists and they prefer them to the steam threshers; firstly, because the capital invested is small compared with the latter—they