No. 20 straw the braid is coarse and wide, and weighs two
pounds and a half. It takes, however, a whole month to plait
a single bollenet from such straw. With Nos. 180 to 180 it takes
about one pound and a half of straw to a bollenet. With extra
straw (No. 180) the braids are not more than 0.020 of an inch
in width, and it takes six months' labor to make a sufficiency
for a single bollenet for a lady.
The braids are cleaned, exposed to the sun for a short time,
and then sent to the manufacturer to be sewn into shape. This
last operation is performed with the greatest care, the
stitches being nearly invisible and yet strong, and not liable to
unravel during the pressure to which the braids are often sub-
jected after being sewn.
The braids are “ungreased,” and any bumps or protuberances
on their surface are effaced by rubbing one portion of the tissue
against another, or by means of friction with a dog-skin glove.

Straw-carrier. 1. An endless apron in a
thrashing-machine to lift the straw as it comes from
the cylinder, and discharge it at the tail of the ma-
chine. The carrier being of open work, the grain
and chaff are sifted out on the way. See Thrash-
ing-Machine.

2. A straw-elevator at the end of the thrasher to
lift the straw on to the rack.

Straw-braid.

Rye-straw is commonly used for braid in this country. It
should be cut when the grain is in the milk, tied up in small
bundles, the heads cut off, and the straw dipped in boiling
water. It is then dried in the sun, being taken in at night to
avoid exposure to dew. For hats the whole straw is used.
For bonnets it is split, and the part under the bun. removed.
The tool used for splitting straw is a piece of wood five inches long,
having a series of sharp spurs near the end, and a wooden or
metal spring at one side to press down the straw as they are
drawn through. The straw is wetted previous to braiding to
make it pliable.

A nicer method of splitting, practiced in Europe, is by means of
a wire having four, six, or eight sharp edges, which is pushed
up the hollow of the straw, dividing it into an equal number of
parts. The varieties of braid are very numerous, depending on
the size and kind of straw, whether split or whole, and the pat-
tern formed by the different methods of interweaving.
The Leghorn or Italian straw braid is made from a variety of
wheat cultivated for this purpose. The straw is harvested in
the mountainous regions of Prato, Rimpoli, etc., where the vege-
tation is poor and stunted, the soil being light and sandy.
The fields are worked and weeded by hand. 14 barrels of
seed are usually sown to the acre; two bushels being “broadcast”
at each time, and each rowing made at a different angle
to the first. The effect of this is to produce a very close, com-
 pact growth, and only one elongated stem rises from each seed
sown.
The straw is harvested while green, and before the ear is fully
developed. It is gathered into small sheaves, weighing about
half a pound each, which are at first placed upright in the field
to dry, one acre bearing about three thousand of them. Next
day these bundles of straw are spread out over rocks and pebbles
in the dry bed of water-courses, where they are submitted to
the action of sun and dew. At night they are covered up to
protect them from rain. The straw is then bleached by means
of sulphuric acid gas.
The ear is next taken below the first joint, the lower useless
portion separated, and the straw cut into lengths of four inches.
Each blade of straw usually furnishes three such lengths. It is
then bleached again.

At this point the straws are sorted according to their various
sizes,—an operation performed by women who acquire, through
long habit, a most remarkable tact in distinguishing the small-
est variation in diameters, as may be inferred from the fact that
in front of each operator are placed piles of straws numbered from 30
to 150, each of which is the receptacle for a special size of straw.
The braids are plaited with from 11 to 13 straws each. Their
length is from 300 to 250 feet, their width and the quantity of
straw entering into them varying according to quality. With