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LONG STAPLE COTTON

(By P. H. McGowan in The Columbia State.)

Washington, March 11.—Long staple cotton of superior quality can be grown to advantage in many parts of our cotton belt if the farmer can be given a more direct interest in preserving the purity and uniformity of his crop. This interest will come only as a result of greater discrimination in buying on the part of manufacturers. Buyers must cease taking inferior mixed fiber and paying as much for it as for the best and most uniform if they really wish to encourage the production of long staple cottons in America. These facts are brought out in the department of agriculture's new bulletin, "The Production of Cotton Buying to Cotton Growing."

Formerly manufacturers have complained that the supply of long staple cotton was inadequate and uncertain, says the Bulletin. The boll weevil was supposed to have made it almost impossible to grow long staple varieties, but this danger has been overcome. New early maturing varieties of long staple cotton have been developed. Improved methods of culture have made it possible to produce good crops of this cotton in many parts of the United States, despite the presence of the boll weevil. Natural conditions favor its production, and almost unlimited supplies may be grown if the farmer will only be encouraged to take more care in maintaining their cotton at a high standard.

The manufacturers who use the long staple cotton have the key to the problem. More general planting of long staple cottons can not be advised until marketing conditions are improved. The department of agriculture's advice to farmers regarding precautions necessary to maintain the purity and uniformity of their cotton is of little value unless they can obtain a better market price by observing these precautions. The present tendency to buy long staple cotton at flat prices like short staple cotton discourages the farmer from taking great care. On the other hand, it encourages carelessness and tendencies that lead to the loss of uniformity of fiber and degeneration of varieties.

Inspection of the cotton in the field affords a much better basis of judgment regarding the essential quality of uniformity than the present method of pulling samples from the bales. Field inspection should precede warehouse grading, especially with long staple cottons. Familiarity with a variety of cotton makes it possible to recognize much smaller percentages of admixture or degeneration than can be detected in the bale, thus affording a greater degree of protection to the buyer and manufacturer and at the same time offering a greater inducement to the farmer to maintain the purity and uniformity of his cotton. It rests largely with the commercial world of manufacturers and buyers to determine what kind of fiber the farmer shall produce today. Many districts of the cotton belt and the newly settled irrigated regions of the southwest are ready and adapted for the long staple variety if the market price warrants its production.

The presence of the boll weevil is now an additional reason for growing long staple instead of short staple cotton. The extra care and precautions that are required to protect the cotton against the weevil make it possible to produce a better quality of cotton, to sell at a higher price, may be considered as a means of securing a return for the increased cost of production or the diminished yield that may be caused by the boll weevil.

That the present system of buying is seriously defective is now widely recognized, and radical reforms are being sought through legislation and otherwise. But it is highly desirable that reforms in their relation to the improvement of the quality of the crop and not merely to secure higher prices for inferior cotton. There is no prospect that such prices can be maintained in the United States. The only secure basis for our cotton industry is in the improvement of the product. Otherwise we remain exposed to the danger of foreign competition. It is much more important to improve the quality of our cotton to secure high prices without their improvement, since high prices for inferior cotton will only regulate the rapidly increasing production of low-grade cotton in other parts of the world.

The general disregard of the essential qualities of length, strength and higher grade on the part of buyers has had the natural effect of leading the farmers to believe that the most desirable character a cotton variety can have is that of giving a high percentage of lint, a large outturn at the gin. This erroneous idea is now firmly fixed in the popular mind, and is not likely to be eradicated while the present system of buying continues. No matter how inferior in other respects a variety may be, thousands of bales of such cotton are sold by advertising a high percentage of lint.

The fact that some of the varieties with the highest lint percentages produce extremely short inferior fiber does not interfere with the planting of such varieties as long as the farmer can sell three-quarts inch cotton for as much as inch cotton or even more and an eighth cotton. The popularity of these short-linted varieties is a result of the present system of buying. In former decades, when the quality of the fiber was considered, nobody would have thought of growing such cotton or of breeding such varieties. In addition to their inferior lint, the high percentage varieties usually have smaller seeds and weaker seedlings, a very undesirable character from the agricultural standpoint. It is easier to get higher percentages by selecting varieties toward small seeds than to increase the amount of lint on the seeds.

Manufacturers have assumed or have been led to suppose that the dangers

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threatening the cotton industry were purely agricultural, such as the exhaustion of the soil, change of climate, or attacks of the boll weevil, and this makes it harder for them to understand that the primary cause of deterioration in the quality of the fiber have been commercial rather than agricultural. This does not mean, of course, that there are not many other agricultural improvements that need to be made, but it does mean that the manufacturer should take greater care to see that the farmer has the necessary inducements to plant superior varieties and to adopt the more careful methods that are necessary to produce better fiber.

Cotton Culture

A new system of cotton culture, which lessens the danger of injury from the boll weevil, has been developed by the office in the bureau of plant industry which is in charge of cotton breeding. By this system it has been made possible to control the formation of the branches, and shorten the season required for the setting of the crop.

The formation of the branches is of thinning by leaving the plants closer together during the early stages of the production of vegetative branches is avoided and larger numbers of bolls are developed on the lower fruiting branches and shorten the season required for the setting of the crop. The formation of the branches is controlled by an improved method of thinning. This method of later and more gradual thinning makes it possible to leave more plants in the rows than is now customary and yet injurious crowding is avoided because the vegetative branches are suppressed, instead of being allowed to grow up and another the lower fruiting branches where the early flowers and bolls are produced. Earlier planting is a means of securing larger yields in regions where the period of crop production is limited either by short seasons or by the presence of the boll weevil. Greatly increased yields have been secured in this way, even as high as 50 per cent. The bureau of plant industry will supply free to cotton growers on application its circular which describes this new system.

10,000 Opium Undershirt

A perambulating opium storehouse, calling himself Hugo Grove, of Schwarzbach, Germany, has been arrested here. A few days ago he bought a cigar and asked the proprietor of the shop to mail a small package for him until called for.

man accidentally dropped the package and discovered the contents. What was revealed impelled him to telephone to the police and investigate disclosed about a pound of opium. Two detectives came out in the store until the man returned to claim his property. They arrested him and searched him, finding a life preserver consisting of an arrangement

around his waist under his shirt, stuffed with 10,000 worth of opium wrapped in silver foil. The police believe he is mixed up with a recently discovered plot to smuggle opium for which a saloon keeper and a Chinese merchant are under arrest and turned him over to the United States authorities.

Why They Go to Church.

Watchman and Examiner. The Rev. Fred H. Preble, D. D., of Auburn, Me., preached a sermon January 11 on "Why Men Go to Church." He was in church Sunday in Auburn, and in the course of the sermon Dr. Preble had collected letters from a large number of professional, business and laboring men. His sermon was an epiphany. The large number wrote that they go to church from force of habit, a good habit which they had formed under parental influence when young and which they were glad to continue. Many wrote that they go to church because they believe it is right to do so. Many others go because of the influence it has on others. They believe churches are a good thing and ought to be maintained and they wish to influence others by their example to sustain the churches. Others wrote that they go to church as a change and rest from ordinary conditions of weekly work. It is noticeable that in most of the letters these motives, mis, and frequently all are given as reason for church attendance. The one thing noticeable is how few say they go to church for spiritual good they get out of it for themselves.

Injured by the Cold

Edgefield, March 11.—W. S. Middleton of Merrivether, the largest grower and shipper of peaches in the state, is here attending court. Upon being questioned as to the probable injury to fruit by the severe weather, Mr. Middleton stated that peaches in his section have been injured about 25 per cent. He does not regard this injury, however, as a misfortune as the quality of fruit will be improved and peaches will command better prices than when a full crop is made. There are about 20,000 peach trees in this section. Mr. Middleton owns 15,000. His orchard netted him last year about \$5,000. He is a progressive farmer and fruit grower and gives his orchard close attention, having just completed the annual spraying of his trees.

Baby's Nap Puzzles Doctors.

Cincinnati, March 11.—Cincinnati physicians are mystified over the case of Hyman Solomon, 3 1/2 years old, who has been unconscious for thirteen days. Dr. A. Crasnow, who is attending the child, said that it is suffering from tubercular meningitis and tetanus.