

NEW METHODS IN DIXIE

(Special Correspondence.)
 Memphis, Tenn., July 22.—Dixie is rapidly outgrowing many of the antebellum industrial methods which have previously kept it behind the times. The manner in which the cotton crop, the south's great staple, is handled and utilized is an example of this spirit of progression.

Up to within a comparatively few years ago Dixie's cotton was shipped in slovenly, ragged, ill bound bales, and the cottonseed after it had come from the gin was thrown away or burned to get rid of it. Today the south is sending its cotton to the four corners of the earth in neat, economic



REWINDING ROUND COTTON BALES.

al round bales, which are easily handled and far more acceptable to export buyers. The cottonseed, which was once thrown away, is carefully pressed for the valuable oil it contains, and even the refuse is utilized as stock food.

Perhaps the introduction of the round bale is the most important feature of the south's progression. Over 600,000 packages of cotton yearly are now placed in railroad cars, in steamships' holds and sent to foreign and domestic mills, baled by this process. In 1896 but 4,000 bales were prepared, which will give an idea of the favor which the invention has met down in Dixie.

At first the growers viewed the "new-fangled" apparatus with the distrust that is common among the people toward systems which differ from the good old fashioned ways they and their fathers have pursued. But by degrees they have been examining the new process and one by one are taking their cotton to the round bale instead of the old compress.

If a man can save even an eighth of a cent a pound on his crop, this means much to him when the yield is so large that he thinks 5 cents a pound is a good price for it. With 9 cent cotton it does not make so much difference, but when the crop runs into 10,000,000 bales then the arguments in favor of the round bale are very strong, for it costs the planter nothing to gin his cotton or to wrap it, while he can sell it directly at the press if he wishes and put the proceeds in his pocket.

It is calculated that he can save all the way from an eighth to a half cent per pound by having the staple baled by the new process. If he has raised 100,000 pounds, this means \$500 to his credit. It goes a long way toward paying the next year's fertilizer bill or toward settling his account with the grocery man or clothing dealer.

The round baling of cotton is one of several industrial revolutions by which the south is freeing itself from debt incurred by the expensive methods of the days before the war. It is an interesting sight to visit one of these presses on a day in the middle of the cotton season.

Around it are perhaps a hundred wagons loaded with fleece just as it is dumped from the baskets of the field hands. Sprawled on the top of the mass may be one or more negroes fast asleep in the sun until their turn comes to unload. Then they start up the mule and drive under a shed from which one or two pipes hang. These pipes may be of tin or of iron and are high enough so that their ends are about a foot above the top of the cotton.

When the wagon is in the right position, a whirling sound is heard as the exhaust fan inside the building begins to operate. The air rushes up through the pipes and sucks the cotton with it in a continued stream. All the darky has to do is keep pushing the mass under the pipes until all has been taken up, the work of a few minutes. Then he drives away, and another wagon takes his place, and so it goes all day and sometimes all night.

On goes the cotton just as picked from the fields until it reaches the series of four or five gins. Through these it is gradually worked, being

separated from the seeds, dirt and any other foreign matter until it goes into the receiver of the press thoroughly cleaned. The seeds drop down into tin pans and are carried to the oil mill near by, if one is operated in connection with the press.

The suction fans also draw the cotton from the gin and into the condenser, which is the first section of the press. Steadily it is crowded downward by the revolving metal rolls which begin to give it form. Stronger and stronger becomes the pressure until it assumes the shape of what dry goods clerks call "cotton batting." Then it begins to revolve around a steel core, gradually enlarging, like the boy's snowball, until it is of the proper size.

From the time the darky's hands shoved it toward the pipes until now no one has handled it. The press operator pushes the lever, stops the machinery and with an assistant lifts the core and rolled cotton out of the bale former, as it is termed. It is weighed, wrapped as one would a bale of cloth, its destination, weight and the name of the press stenciled upon it in big black letters, and then perhaps it is rolled from the door of the pressroom into the freight car which is standing alongside.

Another up to date discovery in connection with the cotton crop is the method of ridding plantations of that dreaded pest, the bollworm. It has been left for a plain, uneducated Texas rancher, assisted by his wife, to make a discovery worth millions to the people of the southern states, where scientists and entomologists have failed after years of study and many costly experiments.

G. B. Boswell has just demonstrated to the distressed ranchers in the vicinity of Fairland, Tex., that he has found a way to protect their cotton from the pests that have been destroying the crops for several years. He does not call his method a discovery, since, he says, he has only used and trained and directed nature's own forces against one of the most insatiate and destructive enemies that the southern farmer has ever encountered.

Boswell and his young wife own a small ranch near Presidio, on the Rio Grande, but are now hunting bollworms in the Brazos river country. Mr. Boswell and his wife are accompanied by nearly 2,000 small birds of two varieties. About 1,500 are white winged sparrows, natives of western Texas and New Mexico. The remainder of the flock is composed of Mexican canaries.

Mr. Boswell is a printer by trade. He was raised on a farm, and from his boyhood has been a passionate lover of birds. During his newspaper career he made what he calls a scrapbook of ornithological information. Three or four years ago while prowling through old Mexico in search of rare specimens he met Senorita Flores Serano, who was also a lover of birds. This mutual sentiment led to a friendship which resulted in matrimony.

The young couple selected a favorable location in a sparsely settled region far out on the Rio Grande, where they built a cabin and set to work to collect and domesticate various species of wild birds. In the course of a short time they had four or five hundred Mexican canaries and white winged sparrows living contentedly in cages, and many of these were so gentle that they could be trusted to take little trips in the open air.

Just at daylight the other morning about 800 or 1,000 of the birds were turned loose upon a field of cotton of twenty acres. Swarms of the little winged pests that are supposed to mother the bollworm could be seen hovering over the field, while hideous looking bugs with snouts ending in a miniature lance literally covered the leaves and stems of the plants.

A flood of white wings descended among the dying cotton, the birds fill



BIRDS FEEDING AND PLANTATION OF BOLLWORMS.

ing the air with chirps of battle. When a fly arose, there was a glitter of white feathers, followed by a chirp of triumph as the bird seized and ground the mother of a billion bollworms between its sharp mandibles.

In three hours the birds had cleared a large plantation of almost every trace of the pest and had flown back to their cage. Mr. and Mrs. Boswell have trained their great flock so that the birds are as tame as pet canaries, and they are hailed as welcome protectors by the cotton planters of the southwest. LEONARD BALDWIN.

DEFENDING OYSTERS

THE FIGHT AGAINST THE DRUMFISH IN BARNEGAT BAY.

Dynamite to Be Employed Against the Piscatorial Destroyer of the Bivalve—The Utter Ruin of the Oyster Threatened.

(Special Correspondence.)

Barnegat, N. J., July 22.—The people who live along the shores of Barnegat bay are almost entirely dependent for a livelihood upon the oyster industry, which is now menaced by the drumfish. So grave is the danger that the New Jersey state oyster commission and the authorities of the various towns adjacent to the bay have begun a systematic warfare against the destroyers that have descended in myriads upon the oyster beds, or lots, as they are called hereabout, devastating all before them.

In recent years the oystermen of this section have expended many hundred thousand dollars on seed oysters, which have been planted all over the bay, and until now they have had a plentiful yield. Last year the scouts of the drumfish discovered that there was good feeding here, and this year they have come by the millions. The fish are from three to five feet long, and each manages to get away with from twenty to thirty oysters at a sitting. A school of drums will settle down over a lot of, say, a hundred acres that has been carefully planted and reseeded for years. When the school rises from the lot, there is not an oyster left to tell the tale of the visitation. They make a clean sweep.

The average drumfish weighs from 100 to 150 pounds. Two hundred and even 300 pounders are by no means unusual. When they feed, they sink to the bottom of the bay and seek a nice hard bed of oysters, clams or mussels.

The drum is a sinister and repulsive fish. With its horrible mouth, small, wicked looking eyes and the slimy, lead colored appearance of its head and shoulders it might, without any great stretch of the imagination, be taken for the fabled sea serpent which we are told sports itself in the billows along the Jersey coast.

Despite its repulsiveness and vicious character the flesh of the fish is good to eat.

Until last year the bay where the oystermen have their beds had been comparatively free from drumfish. Last spring they began to appear in serious numbers. One or two big schools came in and apparently looked the place over and then went to sea again to tell all the other drumfish in creation what a good thing Barnegat would be for them this year. So with the arrival of spring and the growth of the young seed oyster the fish began to arrive in great quantities.

The oystermen began their fight on the drumfish by setting gill nets similar to those used in catching sturgeon around their lots. Numbers of the fish were caught in this manner, but where



DRUMFISH COMPARED WITH AN ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD BOY.

one was captured hundreds came to take its place. One firm caught 175 fish in four days, but the schools that settled on its lots grew to be greater than ever before.

It soon became apparent that this method was entirely insufficient to stay the impending ruin. Then the oyster commission and the local authorities decided to try a more heroic remedy. The plan now is to drive the drumfish into a narrow channel called the inlet and then, after confining them with huge nets, to destroy them with dynamite. Thousands of dollars will be expended in this work. The labor will be of the most arduous and dangerous character. This operation will be continued until the oyster destroyers are completely scared away from Barnegat bay or the breed is entirely exterminated. It is a fight to the finish between the oystermen and the drums, for should the latter continue their devastating work for three or four years there would be an end of the oyster business in this section. The public is with the oystermen in the fight for a selfish if for no other reason, since a considerable portion of the delectable bivalves which please the public palate comes from Barnegat bay. HENRY BAYLEY.

WOMAN AND FASHION

A Box Plaited Coat.
 Box plaited loose coats are in the height of style and are eminently becoming to little girls. The smart model shown is cut on the latest lines and suits pongee, taffeta, moire, velours.



FOR A LITTLE GIRL.

sat in, linen and soft finished serge, but as shown is of pongee, with trimming and collar of ecru lace.

Both the fronts and the back are laid in wide box plaits that are attached for half their length and are free below and fall from the shoulders, the fitting being accomplished by means of shoulder and underarm seams. The neck is slightly open and finished with a round collar that can be of the material or of lace or lace over the material as preferred. The sleeves are in bell shape and comfortably loose.

To cut this coat for a girl of eight years of age five yards of material 21 inches wide, 3 1/2 yards 27 inches wide or 2 1/2 yards 44 inches wide will be required.

Hat Trimmings.

Not so very many birds are being used in millinery just at present, a fact which the Audubonists will receive with gratification, although it is hardly to be attributed to their protests that the milliners are making much of quills of leather. One such feather constituted about the only trimming on a straw sailor of sweet simplicity seen last week. It—the quill—was of brown leather pierced with large holes and embroidered like huge eyelets, with a few strokes of white paint here and there to give the appearance of a feather.

Gown of Crepe de Chine.

The illustration shows a smart gown of light blue crepe de chine. The skirt has the front gore tucked from the waist to the knees, with all the seams



A SMART GOWN

joined by fagoting, and the source headed and bordered by a band of tiny tufts. The bodice is encircled with a group of tufts and opens on a vest of tucked white chiffon. The large shoulder collar is of white embroidered lawn, with a cascade of chiffon below. The sleeves terminate at the elbows and are adorned with tufts and chiffon frills.—Philadelphia Ledger.

The Newest Skirt.

The very newest skirt has a piece of cloth, not a box plait, falling from the waist to the hem at the back. This piece of stuff widens out like a fan at the edge of the train. The front of the skirt is embroidered to follow out the adornment of the collar and revers of the bodice.

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