

When the fruit has started to ripen the opening bolls add their dainty coloring to the gorgeousness of the blossoms, and the fields are a mixed display of pink and red blossoms and white fluffy locks of cotton, and that sight stretches for miles and miles. Then come the pickers. Picking a field of cotton is no trifling job. It takes a good picker to pick a bale of cotton in a week. Pittsburgh is a great industrial town. If all the people of Pittsburgh were good cotton pickers, and all of them were to tackle the cotton crop of the United States they could not get it off of the stalks in six months.

Cotton picking is done chiefly by the darkies, who are largely instrumental in making the crop. Cotton picking season, which opens in this latitude about the first of September, is the event of the year. It is not a difficult task to make the crop. The job is to harvest it. So far the application of machinery to harvesting cotton has been without success. Nothing has been devised yet that will take the place of the human finger and human discrimination. In a way that is all right, for a more interesting spectacle than a bunch of negroes in a cotton field in picking season is hard to imagine. As the work has progressed a little some robust enthusiast with a voice like a pipe organ strikes up a negro melody, and the whole bunch presently gets aboard. A cotton field is the place to appreciate the singular novelty of the negro melodies, the vast space giving softness to any harshness of note or discordant factor in the harmony.

Cotton is not only an interesting member of the southern corner of the Union; it is likewise a profitable one. Years ago the New England states discovered that the water power of the Connecticut and Merrimac rivers could be used to advantage in spinning and weaving cotton. A great industry has sprung up there, one on which much of the prosperity of the eastern states depends. Later the southern states noted the money that came from selling cotton in the cloth instead of in the bale, and the development of cotton mills in the South is one of the wonders of American progress. In 1880 in North Carolina were less than two thousand looms weaving cotton goods. At the present time the state has about sixty thousand looms. In 1880 the spindles numbered less than a hundred thousand. There are now thirty-five times that many, and the state is the one state of the Union that practically finds a market for the cotton it raises. Some North Carolina cotton goes away from home to be spun, but other cotton from other states comes to take its place. This is occasioned by the peculiarities of trade. One man who raises cotton will sell his crop to a broker who is buying a supply for a big northern mill. Another farmer sells direct to the mill, hauling his cotton there from the farm. A modern mill in this respect is that over at Vass. The farmer takes his cotton to the mill as it is picked in the field. There it is ginned for him and set in the big warehouse to his order.

When he thinks he wants to sell it he notifies the mill and a check is sent to him for the cotton at the market price on the day he sells. Such an arrangement gives the mill its supply of cotton and affords the farmer a market at his door practically, for all over North Carolina

are cotton mills sufficient in number to spin all the cotton grown in the state.

At the present time the mills of the South are spinning more cotton than the mills of the North. With the abundant water power of North Carolina and the raw cotton at the mill door, it is an easy guess that the manufacture of cotton will continue to be an increasing industry of the state until industrially and agriculturally North Carolina shall be among the foremost states of the Union. In respect to the convenience of assembling raw material and energy, no state in the Union is so well situated. The power is permanent. When the coal sections have seen the last of their power the rivers of North Carolina will still be running down hill and turning wheels that manufacture cotton goods from the cotton that will continue to be grown within the sound of the whirring spindles as long as people shall wear clothes.

North Carolina is among the foremost cotton raising states of the Union. Of the fifteen million bales that make the maximum crop this state raises about a million. The figures from the United States Department of Agriculture show that North Carolina averages a better yield to the acre than any other state. One of the best cotton belts in the world is that strip of ground which starts in the vicinity of Pinehurst and runs southwestward down through Hoke, Scotland, Robeson and Richmond counties to the South Carolina line, and from there over into Marlboro, Chesterfield and some of the adjacent counties of South Carolina. The light sandy soil is the ideal of cotton land. It warms up soon in the spring, is easy to work, and responds liberally to the use of fertilizer, which seems to be more profitable to use on cotton than on almost any other crop. The average yield of cotton to the acre, the United States over, is about two-fifths of a bale. In North Carolina the average exceeds three-fifths of a bale. In the territory from Pinehurst down through the counties enumerated to South Carolina the average runs close to four-fifths of a bale, many farms exceeding a bale to the acre. With cotton at ten cents a pound and seed at thirty cents a bushel, this makes a bale, with seed, worth about sixty dollars, and where a farm turns off an average of a bale to the acre it means sixty dollars for the acre's crop.

That is why cotton land is bringing good prices, and why the apparently worthless lands of the Sandhill country have shown an activity in the real estate market. A lot of the land around Pinehurst has brought more in a single crop than the land cost. BION H. BUTLER.

#### Real Estate Transfers

Supt. of Streets and Parks Caddell has bought a lot of land upon which he will build a home, near the County School. ¶ Mrs. Betty Glass purchases the Priest house near the Market Garden, and will take possession in the Spring.

#### May We Sail It to You?

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