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Benjamin F. Butler's Unique Plantation Home

A New York Man's Contribution to the Carolina Idea



THIS is the way I came to meet Mr. Guy S. Meloy, who is the expert for the United States upon the matter of the culture of cotton. Maybe I am wrong. It may be the breeding and the varieties of cotton. I was running into the Butlers to borrow a ham, or a drink, and invite myself to dinner. And there he was, planning on behalf of Uncle Sam to determine upon the Butler acres once and for all just what varieties of Long Staple cotton were most conducive to raising the mortgages in the

definite, like the report of a civil engineer. But these matters are never the result of mathematics. Any more than the choosing of a wife is. Or a horse. Or a painting. This, says the connoisseur, suits me. If you want to know why, you must read what I have read, do what I have done, see what I have seen. I know. Just as a man knows how to ride a bicycle.

Any fellow would agree he knew the ways of the woods and the opportunities of the country, to see him build a house. There isn't a dwelling in the whole region more becoming in design, more harmonious with the landscape or more in keeping with the conception we strive to attain of an architecture suggestive of the history and character and traditions of the country. It is a log house, built of poles cut on the spot and plastered with native earth, with a high shingled roof such as we have often admired in Devonshire, built to stay during the time of good Queen Ann. It is a country house, built by a country man out of his native stock, comfortable, sensible and remarkably effective and beautiful. If instead of imitating the third rate boarding houses in the commercial towns the rest of us had followed our fancy, our material and



THE BUTLER HOMESTEAD IS IN HARMONY WITH THE COUNTRY

Sandhills, and just how best to conduct their infant growth.

I ought not to have been surprised. Long before he ever heard of Pinehurst or Moore County Mr. Butler was a familiar of the Department of Agriculture, and a close student with them of all matters pertaining to the culture of cotton. His very being in the neighborhood is a primary tribute to it. For many years he was in charge of a great plantation in Durango, now prey to the vagaries of presidential candidates in the hectic Mexican primaries.

Searching for a more placid if less interesting territory in which to pitch his tent in the open and to follow out the life he had mastered, he and Mrs. Butler came into the Sandhills and selected a headland overlooking a long valley and a distant view of Carthage for their home.

I suppose it would be of the greatest interest to know exactly why a man of the world and an expert in matters bucolic and pastoral should have chosen this place above all others in the United States. I wish I had it for you in black and white,

the obvious, we would have a neighborhood of such dwellings, distinctive and attractive as any in the world.

It is built wait a wing, in the corner of which Mrs. Butler's guiding genius is apparent in a flower garden, and trellis and rustic arbor and the essential foreground for any inhabitable place. Shade trees and perennial shrubs in their infancy surrounding a lawn running to the outlook over the widening valley give promise of delightful surroundings to come.

We went out to look at the farm. There are fifty acres or more in cultivation which Mr. Butler has cleared from the rough, and planted in peach trees and cotton and corn and hog pastures. We were concerned that day, last April, in the cotton tests. Pure seed of every variety of long staple were planted in alternate rows between his peach trees. The planting was done in a method unknown to us, called the hedge row method—close together as one might plant peas. And in the fullness of time the cotton was carefully gathered and separated, each variety by itself, and weighed and tested for