

from a pale delicate lemon to that of the purest gold. Such trees are often the setting of the cotton plantations, which consist of thousands of little green and brown bushes which are now weeping their precious tears of snow. In some fields the green bolls or balls containing the cotton are just ready to open. In others the ribs of the bolls have cracked and the field of brown and green is spotted or dusted with white. Again you see places where the crop is ripe to bursting and the great tufts hang out ready to drop to the ground or into the hands of the pickers. Some of the fields are alive with men and women gathering cotton. Negroes and whites walk through the rows and pick the white bolls. The darkies sing as they pick and their rich, soft voices float into the car windows as we fly by. At many of the stations there are bales of cotton ready for shipping to the factories of the north and south. Nearly every little farmhouse we pass has one or more bales in its yard. The roads are lined with wagons full of what in the distance looks like newly washed wool, but which is freshly picked cotton being carried to the gin, where the seed must be taken out before the cotton can be sold. Other wagons haul bales of cotton, bringing the ginned article back to the farmer's homes. The drivers seem happy. Hear the old negro sing as he hauls his three bales of cotton along in that old cart drawn by an ox. He is rejoicing, for he sits on his year's crop, and he knows it will bring him the money for his winter's supplies.

The cotton crop is the great money crop of the south. If it is good, prosperity shines out of the faces of both darkies and whites, and more than 13,000,000 souls rejoice. If bad, there is a cry of hard times and woe creeps in at the cabin door. The extent of the cotton area of the country is not well understood at the north. The cotton belt covers twenty-four degrees of longitude and about ten degrees of latitude. It now measures about 600,000 square miles, or, according to the census of 1890, almost one-third of the settled parts of the United States. This area of cotton growing territory could be greatly increased, and as it is, only about one-twentieth of it is used for raising cotton. There are in fact only about 20,000,000 acres of cotton plantations, and we have an empire of cotton soil which has never been tilled. The cotton belt has a population of about 13,500,000, of whom 5,000,000 are negroes. These people produce more than half a bale of cotton per capital every year, or more than three bales annually to each family of five, or from seven to nine million bales of cotton every year. The cotton we export annually amounts to more than the output of the gold mines of the world. It is almost double that of the gold and silver mines of the United States. In 1891 it footed up the sum of \$225,000,000, and in 1894 we had one of the biggest cotton yields of our history. The cotton then raised amounted, in round numbers, to 9,890,000 bales. This is more than half of all the cotton grown in the world. We are, in fact, the greatest cotton growers of the universe, and could we sell all the cotton our lands could produce at high prices, the south would be the richest part of the United States. Today cotton is bringing between seven and eight cents a pound, and at this the planters can make money.

They are making money now, and the only people down here who are talking of hard times are the politicians, the office seekers and the political agitators. The cotton crop this year will run over 8,000,000 bales. We will get more than \$200,000,000 in gold from Europe for our cotton within the next few months, and the present increase in our gold reserve comes largely from cotton.

But let me tell you where the most and best cotton is raised. During the past few weeks I have met some of the biggest of our cotton shippers and cotton planters, and have collected matter about the condition of the woolly plant in every part of the world. Only a few years ago Mississippi and Alabama were the leading cotton producers of the Union; now Texas is greater in this respect than all the rest. Last year, or rather, in the cotton year of 1893 and 1894, Texas produced over 3,000,000 bales, or nearly one-third of the entire crop of the United States. It was thought that it would produce a like amount this year, but the drought set in, and the result is that that state has only about one-half its usual crop. The cotton territory of the country can be seen from the following table, giving the estimated yield for 1894-95:

Texas and Indian territory.....	3,219,000 bales
Georgia.....	1,230,000 bales
Mississippi.....	1,200,000 bales
Alabama.....	950,000 bales
Arkansas.....	880,000 bales
South Carolina.....	770,000 bales
Louisiana.....	650,000 bales
North Carolina.....	470,000 bales
Tennessee.....	350,000 bales
Florida.....	65,000 bales
Other states—Va., Mo., Ky., &c.	53,000 bales
	9,837,000 bales

The American bales of cotton, as a rule, weigh more than those of Europe, where the estimates are in bales of 400 pounds, and the crop was, in fact, almost ten million bales. I have not the figures of the world's output last year, but the crop for 1893 amounted, in round numbers, to fifteen million bales. At this estimate the United States produced two-thirds of all the cotton of the world. It will undoubtedly furnish more than half of the world's supply this year.

But what are the lands which make cotton? Here is the list, with the amount each furnished in 1893.

United States.....	8,925,000 bales
India.....	3,000,000 bales
China and Corea.....	1,600,000 bales
Turkey and Persia.....	200,000 bales
Egypt.....	1,220,000 bales
Africa outside of Egypt.....	125,000 bales
Brazil.....	300,000 bales
Peru and the West Indies.....	30,000 bales
Japan.....	100,000 bales
Mexico.....	60,000 bales
Greece.....	10,000 bales

Total for the world.....15,870,000 bales

The cotton area in all the other countries is growing. Europe and Asia would like to be independent of us, and they are doing all they can to stimulate cotton raising elsewhere. They cannot succeed, however, for there is no soil in the world as good for cotton as that of some parts of the United States. The famed Sea Island cotton, which grows on the islands off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, is the finest cotton that old mother earth has ever worn upon her bosom, and other lands have tried in vain to surpass it. I saw it during my visit to Brunswick, Ga., last

week. Our ordinary cotton plant grows from one to three feet high. The Sea Island cotton grows like a tree. The plant at the ground is as big around as a broom stick, and it towers aloft to the height of six feet and upward, shooting off branches every few inches which are loaded with cotton bolls. These bolls are as big as a black walnut with the hull on, and when the cotton is ripe it hangs down all over the plant like so many balls of white popcorn. The cotton is as fine as silk. It shines like satin, and its fiber is from one and a half to three inches long, the longest cotton fiber in the world, and about one inch longer than the cotton from other parts of the United States. All of our cotton surpasses that of other countries, with the exception of that of Egypt, which is not so good as the Sea Island, but is better than the cotton grown back in the interior of the south. Egyptian cotton is valuable to mix with our cotton, and it surprised me to find that our manufacturers import about 100,000 bales of Egyptian cotton every year.

The cotton yield of Egypt took a jump at the time of our late civil war, as did also that of India. The moment Sumter was fired upon cotton went up like a shot. The English factories soon ran out of their supply, and the price of cotton doubled and quadrupled. The Khedive of Egypt took advantage of the situation. He put out immense cotton plantations, and between 1861 and 1865 the crop of Egyptian cotton increased over four hundred per cent. Since 1882, when the English practically got control of the country, they have tried to stimulate cotton raising in the valley of the Nile, and the figures above given represent one of the biggest crops Egypt has ever had. I am told that the English are now attempting to establish cotton factories in the suburbs of Cairo, and that a mill is now being built at Boulak there, near the famous museum in which the mummies of the Pharaohs rest.

When I was in Bombay, India, a few years ago, I saw great cotton factories there, and the English capitalists told me that our war had made India a great cotton country. Today it ranks next to the United States, but the Indian cotton is short in staple and it does not produce more than one-fourth as much to the acre as our American cotton fields. Fully half of the Indian crop is used by the Indian cotton mills, which are steadily increasing in number, and England has still to buy the bulk of her cotton from us. China will eventually use all of her own cotton in the new factories she is building, and Japan, so our consul general at Yokohama once told me, now uses about \$14,000,000 worth of American raw cotton, which is shipped to that country not direct from the United States, but via Liverpool. The cotton raised in Japan is of the poorest variety. It is worse than that of China, which is worse than the Indian cotton. It can only be used for very common cloth, and our cotton will always be in demand in Asia to mix with these poorer varieties.

There is a considerable demand for foreign cottons in the United States to be mixed with wool, and thus sold as woollen goods. We buy for this purpose quite a lot of Peruvian cotton, which is of a more woolly character than our cotton. The Egyptian cotton goes into similar products, and many