1925 Class "B"
2nd Prize

BUG

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Cotton Growing in the British Empire.

"Spectemur Agendo"

Mediæval Europe knew nothing of cotton, but to day we should be hard put to it to do without it. Find ourselves in a strange state without it If some malevolent power were to destroy all the world's cotton at one stroke we should be in a sorry case. Without most of our clothing, without motorcars - for the tyre would have disappeared from their wheels - without aeroplane-wings, without ~~the rolls~~ typewriter ribbons and so without typewriters, without gun cotton or nitrocellulose we should be forced to remodel our civilisation.

It seems ridiculous even to imagine such a state ~~yet it is~~, but it is to this condition, though by a slower method than by black magic, that we are approaching. After the war when Europe was too poor to buy cotton, in order to send up prices American planters cut down their acreage, and with it the world's supply of cotton. Although the crop was much larger than was expected in 1922, and prices fell as a consequence, the surplus left at the end of the year was smaller than that of the year before, plain proof of Europe's that Europe's consumption of cotton was increasing. Without further complications, these two factors, the increase of European consumption and the decrease of American production would be enough to make the need for more cotton urgent, but this is not all. America tends to consume more and more of her raw cotton in her own mills; the rising standard of living in America will inevitably lead

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to a demand for better, i.e. American, cotton. Egyptian cotton is deteriorating and her yield per acre decreasing. Since the time of the American Civil War the need for cotton has never been greater.

We must fit the remedy to the disease. Europe's need is for more cotton and cheaper cotton. Since the prices must fall when more cotton is on the market, the remedy is evident – to produce more cotton. This can be done in two ways; by increasing the yield per acre in the present cotton-growing countries and by growing cotton in new areas where it is not produced at present.

~~Since~~ As there are many such regions in the British Empire their development has become a matter of importance not merely national, but universal.

The chief cotton-growing area in the British Empire is India, where ~~there~~ cotton has been grown since about 800 B.C. ~~when~~ When Caesar wrote of our ancestors 'lacte et carne vivunt, pellibusque vestiuntur' India had already grown and manufactured cotton for centuries. Although large quantities of Indian cotton are produced, twenty four per cent. of the world's supply in fact, it is mostly too short-stapled for use in the Lancashire mills and usually carelessly picked and dirty. Short~~er~~-stapled cottons are grown because these take less time to mature, and the Indian season is necessarily short. Cotton cannot be sown till ~~after~~ after the monsoons and is not picked ~~before the w~~ after the ~~Winter~~ winter frosts in the North ~~and the after~~ and in the South, the ~~soil cracking~~ of the soil tears the roots in the South

or the cracking of the soil, which tears the roots, in the South. ~~One long-stapled cotton, however,~~ Cannot Nevertheless one long stapled cotton, Cambodia cotton, introduced from Indochina in 1906, is grown in the red soils East of the Cardamom Hills, and Burma grows ~~some~~ a little long-stapled tree-cotton.

~~The prospects in the West Indies~~

The prospect in the West Indies is not much pleasanter than in India. Here the finest cotton in the world, Sea Island, is cultivated ~~at~~ along with a shorter stapled ~~native~~ variety, Marie Galante, but the crop is decreasing and now amounts to no more than two thousand bales.

It is to Africa that we must turn for a gleam of hope. Here we have ~~not~~ less achievement ~~but~~ than promise. Three regions in the Sudan, ~~and~~ the Tokar and Kassala districts ~~where the~~ to which have a moderate rainfall and are watered by the ~~or~~floods of the Baraka and the Gash respectively, and the Gezira, ~~where~~ irrigated from the Blue Nile, grow good Egyptian and American cottons. The only difficulty is the labour supply. When Britain conquered the Sudan in 1899, the war was so bloody that of the ~~ten million natives~~ population of ten million natives eight million were killed. Even now when the population has increased to three millions there is not enough labour to cultivate nearly all the land ~~suitable~~ available for cotton growing.

In Uganda, a region ~~which grow~~ equally suitable for cotton, there is no such shortage of population. ~~The natives themselves~~ The natives themselves suggested that they should grow cotton; native farmers took up the new crop enthusiastically,

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thousands of half acre and quaterace farms blossomed out with the pink and primrose blooms of the cotton plant, in a few years Uganda produced more cotton than any other part of ~~Afric~~ Africa.

Cotton was introduced into Nigeria about the same time, and, though the crop is not nearly so large as Uganda's, it is widely grown in the Northern Province. The native industry, however, uses up a good deal of cotton.

There are other regions of Africa where beginnings have been made. except for its lack of railways Tanganyika Territory could grow much cotton, especially in the Kawirondo Province. Kenya Colony, though not so good, is suitable for cotton growing. Sierra Leone, which already produces a thousand bales ~~and~~ is worth developing. South Africa and Rhodesia, though the crop was not sown there till a few years ago, have started well: some cotton is grown in Nyasaland, though this is mostly sown among other crops and is not very good. the Gold Coast and Gambia, though not so promising, ~~be~~ might grow cotton, although the ~~natives~~ Gambia natives prefer ground nuts. The African crop is not tremendous, it is true, but 'well begun is half done' and African cotton growing is certainly 'well begun'.

Another example of a country that has only just taking up cotton and is making rapid strides is Australia. Although no cotton was exported till 1916, a crop of thirty to forty thousand bales was expected for 1925. As yet ~~only~~ Queensland alone has been developed, but this is by no means the only district suitable for cotton growing.

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There remain but four other districts where cotton can be grown, two of these a hope for the future, two a record of past failure — and, and none of them important. Fiji and Guiana are suitable for cotton growing though nothing has been attempted on any considerable scale. ~~Cotton~~ although Cyprus and Ceylon have long grown cotton Cyprus cotton is ravaged by the pink boll worm and is of too short a staple and poor a colour to be exported to Lancashire, and Ceylon grows so little now that she actually imports raw cotton from India to manufacture in her own ~~for~~ factories.

The rest ~~Most~~ of the cotton growing districts of the British Empire have ~~fortunately~~ escaped the fate of Ceylon and Cyprus, but we must not forget, in spite of the ~~brig~~ brightness of the outlook, that the Empire, exclusive of India, only produces four hundred thousand bales of cotton. Many difficulties must be overcome before this output can be increased.

The most obvious, if not the most important of these is the transport difficulty. Till there is some means of getting the crop to market it is useless to grow cotton, but till there is produce to carry it does not pay the private capitalist to build railways. ~~There~~ Unless the government, which can afford to wait till a district is developed for its profits, builds the railways itself there is no way of escaping from the vicious circle, — no crop, no railway, no railway, no crop. This has been done in many cases. The development of Natal and Zululand was hastened by the opening of the Trans Zambesia ~~rail~~ railway line in July 1922. a ~~line~~

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joining the Port Sudan to ~~Barnam line at~~ Khartoum line at Thamiam was built through the cotton growing district of Kassala. There have been railway extensions in Uganda. It is proposed, also, to build new railways through Kassando to reach a point near Jinja and through Uganda to Kano, and to extend and repair the Lindi tramway. Aswell, at Port Sudan and Kilihni harbours have been built.

The mere opening up of a country which is suitable for cotton growing is not sufficient, however, the actual cultivation of the cotton must be superversed. and since cotton ~~Cotton~~ is grown mostly by native labour, ~~and thus the attit~~ the attitude of the native towards his work is important. Most natives, without scientific knowledge of the methods of cotton growing do not think it worth while to take much trouble over the crop or to obey the minute and troublesome regulations they are given. This is particularly felt in India and South Africa. Although the adulteration of cotton at the ginning stations and the watering ~~of~~ of bales reduces both the price of Indian cotton and the demand for it, the Indians, for political reasons, resent government interference. In South Africa, particularly the native, who can get a living by planting his little farm ~~half an acre or so~~ and keeping a few cattle sees no need to go and work on the white man's land to get more The government has been reduced to the rather ridiculous expedient - ridiculous from our point of view, not the natives' - of forcing the black to work for the white for money by imposing a tax on him which will take away that money.

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This state of affairs is open to remedy, however. The ~~spontaneous interest~~ In the interest ~~th~~ which the natives of Uganda and Nigeria ~~takes in~~ take ~~most~~ cotton, an interest spontaneous in the case of Uganda and ~~in~~ Nigeria stirred up by the Government's promise to pay an extra halfpenny a pound for ~~long staple~~ high ~~gro~~ the highest grade of cotton, we have ~~proof that positive~~ proofs that the native is not inherently a bad ~~grower~~ cotton grower. Although the difficulty in India is greater than in other parts a government more to the liking of the ~~e~~ Indians would provoke less opposition than the present one and probably regulate the growing of cotton quite as efficiently. Even if ~~there~~ India should elect to leave the British Empire, though this might be bad for the Empire, I see no reason why it should hurt the cotton trade.

~~In most d~~ This discontent is not actively present in most districts, however, ~~t~~ and the work of the government has been very useful to the cotton grower. Most of this work is carried on in conjunction with the British Cotton Growing Association, formed in 1902, or with its daughter-body, the Empire Cotton Growing Corporation. ~~Since~~ As the government favours the cultivation of cotton by peasant proprietors it has to carry on research work and supervise the native farmers. ~~Research~~ The research is in the hands of the ~~Assoc~~ British Cotton Growing Association ~~which works in conjunction~~ and the Imperial Institute: ~~The Ag~~ the Agricultural Departments, with the help, in some cases, of experts sent out by

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the Association, supervise the cultivation of the cotton cotton is often bought by the Government, as in Uganda and Australia, seed is supplied free as in Australia Uganda and the Sudan, and ginning is mostly carried ~~out~~ by the Association except in India Irrigation works have been built on the Blue Nile, the Sutlej and the Indus, and in South Africa. ~~Measures have been~~ As well, measures have been taken against the pests which attack cotton. ~~In order to~~ The Australian 'Cotton Pest Act', a good example, ~~forbids~~ orders that all cotton must be pulled up and burned at the end of the season so as to leave the pests no breeding-places, and forbids the cultivation of ~~the~~ ratoon cotton, a perennial which harbours pests. ~~On the~~

On the Khanewal estate which the British Cotton Growing Association lets out in small plots to farmers the yield is nearly a thousand pounds per acre, and by a

The Association lets out an estate in Khanewal to small farmers for the purpose of cotton growing, and the yield is nearly a thousand pounds per acre. By a similar arrangement, in the Sudan, the government, which provides land and water, the Sudan Plantations Syndicate, which gins and markets the cotton, and supplies the seed, and the growers share the price of the cotton.

If the Governments continue to work on lines such as these, improving transport and encouraging growing, there is no reason why the Empire should not eventually produce enough cotton to satisfy the increased needs of the world If we are to ~~or~~ are to believe the prophets Australia

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will soon produce a million bales, India two millions of long-stapled cotton, so there is no need to despair for the future.

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