

per cent. of its area would be capable of producing all the cotton now consumed in Europe and the United States—over six million bales.

Under what conditions is this work now accomplished, or yet to be done? No longer by the forced labor of the slave upon the plantation, but by the labor of freemen, and mostly of freeholders on the farm. In most of the States where it is now grown cotton constitutes the salable or money crop of the farmer, who, in other respects, is becoming entirely independent as to his subsistence, raising food and meat to a greater extent than ever before. The Southern farmer still finds in cotton the means wherewith to furnish himself with money for other purchases. Cotton, therefore, being more and more the surplus crop or profit of the farmer, as distinguished from the planter, it becomes more difficult to determine its cost, its annual quantity until each year's crop has been delivered, or the prices at which its production will be checked. In answer to a very extended inquiry lately made by the writer, he has received estimates of the cost of production, ranging from six to fifteen cents per pound; the latter cost, however, having been given by one who, on twelve hundred acres of land, made only four bales of cotton the previous year. The general range of the estimates of cost were from six to ten cents. One answer to the question of cost was most significant. One said, "I have a nephew, twenty years of age, who, without the least detriment to his schooling, and working Saturdays, produced four bales of cotton." It may be asked, What did this lad's cotton cost to produce?

According to these returns, this Centennial year is also marked by greater improvements than ever before in the selection of seed, in the improvement of tools, in the use of fertilizers, and in the average crop per acre; positive evidence having been given of the production of two thousand five hundred pounds of lint or clean cotton on a single measured acre in Georgia. It was not claimed that this had been, or could be, profitable; but it is significant of the experiments that are being tried in many places. The average estimates of profitable work range from four hundred to one thousand pounds of lint, or clean cotton, per acre, according to the quality of the soil and the kind of work done.

The last ten years have also witnessed the conversion of the seed of the cotton-plant into many useful articles but little known before.

The future production of cotton in the United States, and the time within which our staple will take the place of all inferior grades is, therefore, only a question of numbers and intelligence. In respect to intelligence, it is not to be questioned that the planter of old time had far more skill than many of the farmers of the present time; but the