

The Cotton Situation

A radical change in the cotton situation adds to the numerous vagaries in the trade of this year. The Government report on the condition of cotton at the beginning of October, which showed a possible yield of considerably under two-thirds of a crop, instead of plunging the South in gloom, has brought about a feeling of decided satisfaction. This is due to a rapid advance in the price of cotton to about 13 cents per pound, as compared with less than 10 cents per pound about a month ago and 6 to 7 cents per pound a year ago. Still higher prices are expected, as the production this year will fall much under the consumption and the stocks carried over from last year will hardly more than make up the deficiency. Thus, the planters who have not sold their crop in advance will realize considerably more from their short production this year than could have been obtained if the crop had come up to the expectations of the early part of the season. The cotton situation, which was the one unfavorable element in the country's trade, has thus undergone a remarkable transformation, and other sections of the country will undoubtedly rejoice with the Southern planters in this improvement in their position.

In this connection, it seems proper to call attention to the fact that, notwithstanding the placing of cotton ties on the free list by the Underwood-Simmons tariff act, this year's crop will be wholly baled with steel hoops manufactured in the United States. The supply of hoops from Europe was completely cut off, and American manufacturers had the Southern market to themselves. They were generous to the South, and instead of

charging exorbitant prices, which they could have easily done, they furnished cotton ties at a decidedly reasonable rate. The American manufacturers of cotton ties have shown in this instance, as other American manufacturers have often done, that when given a monopoly of a market, whether by tariff or by war, they refrain from taking sordid advantage of the consumer.