

# THE COTTON OF CENTRAL ASIA.

---

By M. BRODOWSKY.

---

*To the American Geographical Society, New York :*

Requested by the vice-president to give some information about the condition of agriculture in Central Asia, I have the honor to transmit to the Society my pamphlet, in the Russian language, "Observations on the Agriculture in the Samarkand District." In addition to this pamphlet I consider it necessary to say a few words as to the significance of the cotton which is raised in Central Asia for Russian manufactures.

Amongst all branches of the manufacturing industry in Russia, the first for quantity of production and also capital invested, is the cotton manufactures, namely: spinning, weaving of cambric, calico, and chintz and wadding manufactures. In the year 1868 these manufactures produced 121,674,000 roubles worth of goods. They consume, on an average, about 3,000,000 pounds (equal to 108,339,000 pounds avoirdupois) of cotton, and more than 4,500,000 roubles worth of English yarn.

From the whole quantity which Russian manufactures consume, 2,200,000 pounds (79,448,600 avoird.) is imported through the European frontier, and only 800,000 pounds (28,890,400 avoird.) come through that of Asia, namely: from Central Asia, 600,000 (21,667,800 avoird.), and 200,000 pounds (7,222,600 avoird.) from Persia. These figures will show that of all the cotton required for Russian manufactures, only one-fifth is obtained from Central Asia.

Across the European frontier are imported 1,200,000 pounds (43,445,600 avoird.) of American cotton, graded Upland, and New Orleans; and about 1,000,000 pounds of East India (Sourat) cotton, graded Darwar, S, and Dollerah, and very little of Egyptian cotton. All this cotton gets to Russia by the interposal of England, which has such powerful control that only a trifling quantity comes directly from the United States. The cotton is bought in Liverpool and gets to Russia through Baltic or German ports, and thence by railways.

With the annexation to Russia of Tashkend, Kodgent, Samarkand and lately part of the Khiva's Khanate, on the right side of the River Amon-Daria, the northern edge of the zone of cotton culture enters imperial territory. The conditions of continental climate of this district, though not wholly favorable for raising cotton of high grades, could at least be expected to allow improvement of native grades to such a degree as to make it a substitute for East India cotton. Cotton of Central Asia, in its present aspect, has two essential imperfections by which demand for it is lessened compared with that grown in Saurat—its shortness of fibre, and bad cleaning. These imperfections in the cotton of Central Asia could be removed, to a certain degree, by thorough cultivation of seeds, and also by establishing improved gins for cleaning, and presses for packing. With such improvement it can be expected that the cotton of Central Asia will be substituted in Russian manufactures for that of East India, which is imported into Russia at the present time in the quantity of about 1,000,000 pounds.

M. BRODOWSKY.