

STEMMED, DRYING AND SWEATING ESTABLISHMENT.

ORIGINAL IDEAS, BROAD CONCEPTIONS AND BOLD EXECUTION DISTINGUISH THE MANAGEMENT—THE CONCERN HAS NO EQUAL IN THE U. S.

TOBACCO is one of the natural products of American soil, one of her greatest staples, and Kentucky as the residuary legatee of old Virginia has become famous as the greatest tobacco growing State, not only in this nation but in the world. The excellence of quality and the immensity of quantity produced in her borders is wonderful in its proportions, and there is no section of the State that can surpass the country around the little city of Carrollton for fine tobacco. Being situated as it is, on the Ohio river, right at the mouth of the Kentucky river, in a region where burley tobacco grows to perfection, and ranks in the market as the finest and best flavored, most smooth in this, the world's centre, for fine tobacco production.

This can easily be kept up by farmers taking the proper care of their land, giving it needed rest, and especially clovering it. The importance of keeping the seed pure is a special point of value, and to this end the manufacturer's association, of which Nick Finzer is president, and R. F. Toewalter is secretary and treasurer—both these gentlemen being from Louisville—at its last meeting, appointed a committee and made an appropriation for procuring the very best Burley tobacco seed to be had on the market and distributing it among the farmers in the Burley tobacco growing districts.

Farmers can do a great deal in this work by saving their own seed when pure, for five to ten years ahead, instead of saving seed each year, from the fact that every remove from the original pure seed deteriorates the quality of the seed, and this is one of the greatest causes of the inferior quality of much of our Burley tobacco. The Carrollton tobacco belt extends up and down on either side of the Ohio river for a distance of from twenty to thirty miles, as well as up the valley of the Kentucky a similar distance, and its annual production will vary from eight to ten million pounds. This territory can be vastly increased by the product of another section equally as large, by going farther up the Kentucky river, which is now locked and dammed for more than one hundred miles, and is navigable for that distance at all times of the year, thus making Carrollton the natural market for the product of that entire section of the country.

While several other sections of this great State are noted for their fine Burley tobacco crops, this section is conceded to be unsurpassed by any in the land, and to that end, the "Democrat," desirous of knowing more of this crop's gathering, and the processes used in its preparation for the manufacturer, naturally sent its representative to the largest exclusive tobacco stemmery in the United States.

Located in the south part of our city we found Mr. Barker, the proprietor,

one hundred and fifty hands industriously engaged in stemming, pressing and preparing the tobacco ready for the dry house. From whence the tobacco is prepared by passing through various processes for the manufacturer, and is made equal to the very best of old tobacco.

The machinery required for this work is extensive and varied, and there are more labor-saving devices and superior machinery than the writer is able to allude to in this short article, but suffice it for us to say that everything is complete from cellar to garret, and that the machinery used is the very best in the land for the purposes for which it is made—and this is not all. A large portion of it is the product of the inventive brain of Mr. M. I. Barker, the able and competent proprietor, who is full master of every detail of his extensive business.

About fifteen years ago the many factors of plug tobacco began using Burley tobacco, which had been formerly used only for fine cut. Up to that time no tobacco was used until it was a year old, and no attempt had been made to improve on nature in the preparing of the leaf.

After this time the rapid increase of the use of tobacco created a danger of exhausting a supply of the old tobacco on hand and made it necessary to adopt some artificial method of preparing the new crop. The first device attempted was the steaming of tobacco, which made it soft and pliable, long enough to be packed in hogheads, but when it cooled off it became brittle, hard and worthless. But, from time to time, improvements have been made, until today we find Mr. Barker preparing tobacco by artificial means, so perfect and uniform as to equal, or even surpass the very best of air-dried tobacco.

The annual consumption of Burley tobacco by a few of the principal factories is now one hundred and twenty million pounds, and the present supply is only twenty million pounds. As no air-dried tobacco can be supplied to the market before the first of next August, it will take sixty million pounds to supply the demand, thus leaving a deficiency of forty million pounds to be prepared by artificial means. These figures prove conclusively the value of Mr. Barker's system of preparation.

The capacity of this concern is twenty-five thousand pounds of tobacco per day. By Mr. Barker, both the farmer, who raises the tobacco, and the manufacturer, who buys it of him, are given the fairest and most honorable treatment. As when he buys of the farmer, he gives him prices consistent with the market, together with an honest grading and weighing, while to the manufacturer he shows

an actual sample of each hoghead, and gives him actual weight, and it is a remarkable fact that while other dealers have their scales broken open and their tobacco inspected, a guarantee from Mr. Barker is always sufficient. This manner of treating his fellow man has not only been a benefit to those with whom he deals, but has enabled him to honestly build up a business the like of which is not to be found in this special line in the United States. This is all the more wonderful

when we remember that he started in here, fifteen years ago with only one building, little or no machinery, limited capital and with a trade and business standing to be built up, by years of hard work and honest dealing.

Then, he depended upon the hot days of July and August to sweat his year's hoarding of tobacco. Now, he makes his own heat, then he depended upon the summer to dry his tobacco; now he furnishes his own drying machinery, and what used to require a year now requires less than thirty days at Barker's Stemmary.

The plant of this tobacco establishment covers one entire block, and occupies four fine buildings. The first, and the one in which Mr. Barker began business, is a frame fifty by one hundred and fifty feet, four stories, and has a press room attached thirty by one hundred and fifty feet, one story.

Another frame, sixty-six by two hundred feet, four stories, then a fine brick, where the main line is located, and the most of the work is done, fifty by one hundred and twenty feet, four stories. Added to this is the stone sweat room, one hundred by one hundred and sixty feet. All these are properly equipped, everything being arranged in the most convenient manner, and a capital of one hundred thousand dollars, is invested in the plant, beside a much larger sum which is required to run the business.

From here is paid out many thousands of dollars annually for labor, and many other thousands for material, and the business has done, and is still doing more, to advertise the city of Carrollton abroad, than any concern in her borders. The people of this town and county highly appreciate this valuable institution, and only wish that they possessed more such live enterprising establishments, and more men with such successful business qualification and personal merit as Mr. Barker, who possesses in the highest degree the respect, confidence and esteem of all with whom he