

Cotton Spinning in Japan

Cotton Yarn ranks highest as regards aggregate value amongst the articles imported into Japan. The trade has developed enormously of late years, the consumption for the past 12 months being estimated at 6000 bales of 400 lbs each, representing a value of nearly 10 Millions of Dollars paid to foreigners for a single article! China is also a large consumer taking annually some 3000 bales or about 2 1/2 Millions of Dollars worth.

England although incapable of producing any cotton from her soil, imports the raw material, spins it into yarn, and supplies with the manufactured article, the greater portion of the wants of the whole world, this, as everyone knows, being one of her great industries of which she is so justly proud. So long ago as 1866 it was estimated that the machinery set up in England was capable of producing 64 Millions of Miles of Yarn per day of 10 hours, or a length of thread equal to more than 4 times round the earth every minute!

India of late years however has threatened to become a formidable rival through the starting of Spinning Mills in the Bombay Presidency, the productions of which are already beginning to find great favor amongst consumers in this country.

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The question therefore may well be asked, why should Japan not, endeavour to obtain a share of this enormous trade, or at least try to spin for her own people some portion of the yarn that are now compelled to buy from England and India? — If India can compete successfully with England why cannot Japan also do so? She seems to possess all the elements required for success, viz, a ready market for the manufactured article within her own borders, as well as close at hand in China, cheap labour, abundant power, whether actual in the shape of water power, or potential in the form of coals; & a supply of the raw material produced at home (an advantage not possessed by England) or easily obtainable from China and India — indeed, with freights so low as they now often are, there is no reason why she should not be able if necessary to compete successfully with England in purchasing the material in any part of the world.

Any attempts ^{hitherto} to make a commencement, such as the small Mill at Oji (Tokio) have proved failures financially, but this is no doubt owing to the small scale on which such endeavours have been made — The Machinery used for the spinning of the cotton of other countries is moreover unsuitable for the comparatively short staples

Staples of China and Japan -

The writer has received estimates and specifications for a complete spinning & weaving Mill specially designed for working the short, stapled cottons of Japan and China - These have been prepared by a firm of the first Machinists in England who have given special attention to the matter & who state that they have spent over £800 starting experimenting making machines suitable for treating these short, stapled cottons - They advise that such cottons to be worked with success, require special machinery and state that it is of the highest importance, people in this country should not be misquided in the matter, but start only with the best machinery, that above everything, second-hand and cheap machinery must be avoided as certain to prove fatal - With the Machinery they have invented, they state that China cotton can be spun with ease up to No 24 and possibly finer, which compares very favorably with the Gji Mill where the writer understands nothing finer than No 14 can be produced -

The above estimates show that the Machinery for a Mill of 10000 spindles including all can Motor Power, would cost approximately \$100,000
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laid down in Japan - The Steam Motor Power might, be dispensed with, where Water Power is available, and the cost, be so much reduced, but, this is scarcely to be recommended unless in localities where a steady and abundant supply of water is obtainable at all seasons of the year -

Such a Mill as above is, is estimated would produce 12000 lbs. of No 20 yarn per week of working days, that is about 30 Bales of 400 lbs each - It would require a building 3 stories high 120 feet x 100 feet or say covering an area of $33\frac{1}{3}$ Acres. To start the Mill it might be advisable to employ a foreign manager with 3 foreigners as assistants

Along with the specifications the following samples have been sent, viz

- 1st A sample of China Raw Cotton
- 2nd Bales of yarn spun from the same by the ^{official machinery referred to}
- 3rd Gray cloth woven from the said yarn
- 4th Bleached cloth

all which the writer will be happy to exhibit and explain

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Yokohama to 23 A 8th January 1879

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