

# WOMAN AUTHORITY IN COTTON WORLD

Katherine Giles Is Leading Fore-caster of That Important Crop.

BEGAN WORK AT \$8 A WEEK

Her Reports, Gathered From Numerous Correspondents and Skillfully Prepared, Rank With Those of the Government.

By RICHARD SPILLANE.

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A girl who went to Wall street 14 years ago to work for \$8 a week has become a recognized authority throughout the world on cotton—a crop that now means a thousand million dollars or more a year to the American people. At times, as a result of a report which she issues, the markets of New Orleans, New York, Liverpool and Havre are violently agitated. Brokers buy and sell tens of thousands of bales, risk hundreds of thousands of dollars and the change in the value of cotton means millions of dollars to the growers and the spinners. Thousands of men accept her report with as great a faith as they do that of the United States government in the preparation of which a big force is employed in Washington. She works alone. She sits in an office in Broad street that looks out on a well made by skyscrapers. The post-man brings more than 30,000 pieces of mail matter a year to her. She has 2,500 correspondents scattered throughout the cotton belt. She is a student of the soil, a student of the weather and a student of cotton, the plant. She is a statistician par excellence and has made for herself a position in the business world that is unique for one of her sex.

The girl who went to Wall street was Katherine M. Giles. She is a woman now with the gray beginning to show in her hair. She was born in Salisbury, Orange county, N. Y. She was graduated in the public schools. She never has been to college. As a girl she had a bent for mathematics and composition. The Giles family was a large one. There were eight children, six girls and two boys. Every one of the girls has become a successful business woman.

### How She Got Her Start.

The man who gave Kate Giles her first job had worked in the agricultural department in Washington. He came to New York and opened a statistical bureau to furnish reports on corn, wheat, flax, oats and cotton.

The principal work of Miss Giles was to rule paper according to the needs of this man and then copy the reports as he worked them out. She thought he was wonderful. Being deeply interested in his business, she naturally studied his methods of arriving at the condition of the various crops. His health was poor and she did everything she could to lighten his labors. The first recognition she got that her services were appreciated was when he gave to her the key to his letter box in the post office. That was strong evidence of confidence, for a crop statistician must be most careful of his correspondence. Little by little her duties were enlarged. In the first year of her service her employer had a serious illness. The work was more than he could attend to and he gradually gave up reporting on corn, wheat, oats and flax. She took charge of the cotton. She made up the reports on this crop and sent them out in his name until he died.

With the death of her employer she had to look for another position. She got one with a big cotton firm. Her work there was of a character that was delightful to her. Her employers wanted her to keep in close touch with every development in the South that affected cotton. How she was to do this depended largely on herself. The reputation of the firm was excellent and it had a good many clients in the cotton belt, but the most reliable information about cotton comes from sources that are not intimately concerned with the size of the crop. It was left to her to open up new fields of correspondence. What her employers wanted was accuracy. They judged her by results. She remained with this firm for two years and then resigned to accept a similar position with Charles D. Freeman, who was the beard man for Price, McCormick & Co. in the days when that concern was perhaps the largest in the cotton trade in the world and who, when the firm failed, went into business for himself and became one of the most prominent operators on the exchange.

She had been learning more and more about cotton each season and was broadening mentally. She is a woman of keen perception and calm judgment and as exact and painstaking where figures are concerned as a scientist is in any laboratory work she undertakes. She was perfectly satisfied with Mr. Freeman as the employer and Mr. Freeman was perfectly satisfied with her as an employe, but after she had been with him two seasons she got a notion that she ought to get more money. Every-one else in the office had received an increase in salary. She couldn't quite understand why she had been left out, so she made an application for an increase.



"So You Are Dissatisfied," He remarked.

Mr. Freeman listened to her and thought for a moment. He was paying a fair amount to her and probably was a trifle annoyed because so many of his clerks had asked for more money. "So you are dissatisfied," he remarked. "I dismissed a man two weeks ago for being dissatisfied."

She assured him she wasn't dissatisfied. She was anything but dissatisfied. He shook his head.

A little later he left a note on her desk saying that he would release her from her engagement over the holiday. In other words, she might go. The holiday was Memorial day. It was a sad one for Kate Giles. Of course she told her mother all about it. Her mother advised her to go right back and work just as if nothing had happened. Miss Giles returned to the office, but was timid about speaking to Mr. Freeman. She told him if he didn't mind she would continue as before. He told her no. "When you want to leave," he said, "you leave. You've done excellent work for me. You can't do any more for yourself. You can't do the notion of being independent, of building up a business for yourself. Follow that idea."

Mr. Freeman did more. He had furnished all the correspondents of Miss Giles with an agricultural publication of particular interest to them. The subscriptions to these papers he had paid for a year ahead. He gave this subscription list and the paid subscriptions to Miss Giles. He was as kind and generous to her as any employer could be, but she faced the future with trepidation. It's one thing to have a regular salary coming in each week. It's another to trust to luck as to what monetary return you are going to get. It's hard for a man to give up the surety of the pay envelope. It's harder for a woman.

Miss Giles wanted ten subscribers to her service. Subscription to such a service as she planned costs a good bit of money. She got the ten subscribers. She had feared the fact that she was a woman might make some of the persons she applied to hesitate. It didn't. Without her appreciation of the fact, many men had come to know that the reports from Charles D. Freeman's office were the work of a woman and that the woman was Kate Giles.

When she got her ten subscribers she did a very womanly thing. She went to Mr. Freeman and told him he had been so kind to her that she wanted to furnish the service to him free of charge. He checked her before she had gone very far in her speech and told her he had given his subscription to her as a start in business and he didn't want another word from her about it.

### Has Host of Correspondents.

As her own boss Miss Giles has done things according to her own ideas. There isn't a district of any importance in the cotton belt in which she hasn't a correspondent. She has selected these correspondents with care. Some of them are cottonseed oil men, some are bankers, some are merchants, some are cotton growers, some are cotton ginners. Twelve times a year she sends to each of them for information as to the situation regarding cotton in their particular neighborhood. It costs nothing to them to furnish the information except the time and trouble in the writing. She furnishes printed blanks for them to write on and the postage to cover the cost of the mailing. Each correspondent gets a moderate compensation. In addition to answering each question she asks, the correspondent is invited to add such remarks as he sees fit.

Reports from 2,500 picked correspondents have decided value. But these only form one source of information to Miss Giles. She watches the weather reports for every part of the South, from Cape Hatteras to the Rio Grande and from the Ohio river

to the Gulf with as much intensity as a girl does the clouds on the day of a picnic. There isn't a shower in the South of which she doesn't keep a record. There isn't a place in any one of the southern states of which she cannot tell you the amount of rainfall any day, any week or any month in the whole cotton year. She keeps detailed records in regard to temperature. She keeps track of the acreage to cotton in every county in the South-land. She watches everything in the way of improvement in plantation work just as she does the ravages of the boll weevil and the army worm. She knows the amount of fertilizer that is purchased each spring and over what section it is distributed.

She is conservative. She knows her correspondents are honest and well intentioned. Probably no one in the cotton world ever had a better lot. But she knows, as everyone knows who has had anything to do with agricultural correspondents, that the vision of the reporter is colored at times by the people he reports on.

She has to gauge the human element as well as the elements of nature in her calculations. She takes her 2,500 reports and studies them, putting down figures and comparing them with others that she has already prepared. Then she has to consider these figures in the light of the acreage, the precipitation, the amount of fertilizer and the various other things that enter into the making of the cotton crop. With all her figures and all her information in hand she has to make her own deductions based upon her own special reasoning and her individual judgment.

Twelve times a year she has to do this. She sends out one report in May, two in June, two in July, two in August, two in September, one in October, one in November and one in December. She gets out her report from three to five days in advance of that of the United States government. Sometimes the government statisticians have blundered egregiously. Miss Giles, working alone, has been right more times than has the agricultural department with all its facilities. In 1905 her reputation was established throughout the world by reason of the verification of her predictions by the outturn of the crop. She immediately became a market factor. Since then the Giles report is watched for with deep interest. She has to go to extremes to safeguard it from being made public before her subscribers receive it and before they can take advantage of its information.

### Only Fourteen Subscribers.

She limits her subscribers to twelve persons in the United States and two in India. One of her foreign subscribers is in Bombay and the other in Virangum. To the foreign subscribers the report is cabled. To her American subscribers the report is delivered at 9:30 a. m. on the day it is issued. All get the report at the same time, their representatives meeting at Miss Giles' office at that hour and receiving the sealed paper from her hands. She has a secondary service, which is sent by mail to five subscribers. This is simply her regular report.

All sorts of subterfuges are resorted to by persons who want to get Miss Giles' opinion regarding cotton. So far as possible she secludes herself. You won't find her name in the telephone directory. She had it taken out because so many men called her up and by adroit questioning endeavored to get some idea from her regarding the crop. To her subscribers her reports may be of great value at times of grave doubt as to the crop, if kept from the knowledge of others.

Miss Giles is the only woman who is a cotton crop forecaster or statistician. Another woman entered the field, but didn't last. She had been in the agricultural department and was fairly capable, but she couldn't make headway

### PLEASANT WAY TO TRAVEL.

of Locomotion in Mesopotamia No Charms for One Tourist Who Tried It.

All countries to ride instead of a public evidence of wealth, in Mesopotamia the rich man would do well to consider his luggage before he embarks. If he is not he may have a strange and uncomfortable time before his journey. I am not rich, but comfortable. I made arrangements for a "vajah" one morning without knowing what sort of conveyance had let myself in for. I soon found out all about it.

The back of a mule were slung two covered wooden boxes, open at the front and back to give air and a view of the road, and into one of these I leaped. In the other box was the driver, my American friend who was waiting for us at the city gate. When we were settled in our cramped cage the man who led the mule jerked its head and off we went. I seized the wooden support above my head to keep from pitching out.

For in my life I have experienced no other motion so amazingly like the wild surge of the sea. If I were a good sailor I would have been seasick in ten minutes. It was exactly like being in a tiny rowboat in the middle of the Atlantic ocean during a hurricane. I took it out because my friend's wife made no complaint and I was ashamed to weaken first. But when we came to the gate and my friend appeared I insisted on taking his horse and giving him my place. Ever after I either rode horseback or walked.

### THE CHICKEN WELL DRESSED

Idaho Biddy Has a Full-Dress Flannel Coat and Seems to Be Proud of It.

The proudest chicken in Boise lives on West State street.

The bird has no medals for pedigree, no certificates for being a champion layer, no diplomas for good behavior, or unusual size. Yet without any of these attainments, this fowl is the observed of all observers. Citizens go blocks out of their way to see the bird, which struts with pride before their view.

This fowl claims the distinction of being the only bird in Boise to possess a swallow-tail overcoat. Its owner takes a personal interest in all her hens, and it was with some concern that she noticed during the summer that one of the late spring chickens failed to develop any feathers on its back.

When the cool evenings came on she noticed the bird seemed to feel the cold. She had a full dress flannel shirt a unique coat, modeled after a full-dress coat, with no front to speak of, but plenty of back and tail. Slits were arranged for the bird's wings, and the fowl seems to others in the coop to be particularly proud of the costume.

### Tales of Progress.

The "aluminum that is as hard as steel," has been invented again. This time the inventor is an Australian, and the claims made for his discovery certainly do not err on the side of modesty. In addition to superior hardness, he announces that his new alloy can be welded and soldered, has a high tensile strength, and is noncorrosive. This last quality, of course, belongs to all forms of the metal.

The world will look on such claims with a skeptical eye, and yet, they represent the goal toward which the world is moving. Sooner or later, by a sudden discovery or a long series of slow advances, aluminum will be made to do most of the work that now falls on iron and steel. Aluminum has many advantages. It is light in weight, it does not rust, it is found everywhere and in inexhaustible quantities. Every clay bank is a mine of it.

### Beginning of Great Invention.

A far back as 1668 experiments were being made with what savants called an "otacousticon," which brought distant sounds to the ear and was a far-off promise of the "long distance" and "wireless" messages of today. Samuel Pepys was abroad in those days, and of course he saw the new toy, tried it, and mentions it in his diary. He went with Lord Broucker to "the Royal society," and "here to my great content, I did try the use of the otacousticon, which was only a great glass bottle broke at the bottom, putting the neck to my ears, and there I did plainly hear the dancings of the oars of the boats in the Thames to Arundel gallery window, which without it I did not in the least hear."

### Tea-Drinking Nations.

Recent statistics show that the English race is easily first among tea-drinking nations. From these we learn that if an Englishman, an American, a Russian, a German, an Austrian, a Frenchman, and an Italian were to sit down together and order drinks in a quantity that would show the relative consumption of these beverages by their respective nations, some would get enough for a bath, while others would obtain only a few mouthfuls. If the races sat down to tea, the Englishman would find himself confronted with 1.80 cups, the American with .800, the Russian with .775, the German with .36, the Austrian with .20, the Frenchman with .18, and the Italian with only one.

# Along Peace River



FORT VERMILION TRADING POST

THE PEACE river was first brought to the notice of the world by Alexander Mackenzie. Not satisfied with following to the Arctic ocean the river which bears his name, he went up the Peace river, crossed the Rocky mountains and made his way to the Pacific ocean, which he reached in September, 1783. The previous winter he had spent at Fort MacLeod, built for his convenience, and afterwards continued as a trading post. Fort MacLeod is located on the north side of Peace river, six miles above Peace River Crossing, and nearly opposite the mouth of Smoky river.

Last summer the American museum sent an expedition up into that country, and the trip up and down the Peace river is entertainingly described by Pliny E. Goddard in the American Museum Journal. After telling something of the changes in trade routes and of the preliminary journey from Edmonton to Peace River Crossing, he continues:

The Grenfell, the little river boat that was to take us downstream, had steam up and dinner cooked when we arrived. About two that afternoon we crossed the Peace and took on several cords of wood. With a whistle to cheer at the company's boat which had ex-

pected to pull out before us and did not, we moved downstream. The little Grenfell could make about fourteen miles, and the river itself was making eight because the water was very high. It was liquid mud carrying driftwood and logs—even whole trees. The sun slowly moved from south to west, from west to northwest, and then was hidden behind the river banks. That it had set we could not be certain, for there was plenty of light until about eleven o'clock, when we tied up to the banks so the engineer could sleep.

Islands Are Numerous. The river is full of islands. In the 300 miles there are about two hundred of them, covered with pine and spruce timber. As we proceeded the banks grew lower and the river wider. That night we tied up at North Vermilion and went down to the river bank instead of up, the river was so high. Here, 600 miles from the railroad, there are two little communities of whites and half breeds, one on either side of the river. They get mail once a month and are glad to get it, al-

nearly all back from the river securing food for the winter. A week's stay was made at Dunvegan, some miles from which place a band of Beaver live on the reserve. Near them were several prosperous agricultural settlements.

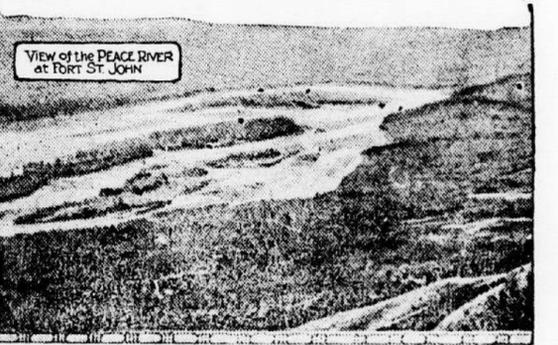
Many Bears After Berries. Coming back to Peace River Crossing was pleasant and should have been easy. If one sits down on a raft or in a canoe and sits still he will quietly pass the 240 miles from St. John to Peace River Crossing. Our luck was a canoe loaned to us. Because it was the homeward journey the natural speed of the current, three miles, was increased to five or six by the use of the paddles. It is tiresome work, but a few days of it puts a large share of conceit into one when he tries his muscles against a loafer. Yes, there were bears, there always are on the Peace. This was the time of ripe berries and there were many bears. We know that they, Indian-like, must have "made medicine" against us, for nothing else could have prevented our killing one.



ONE OF THE MANY ISLANDS OF THE PEACE RIVER

View of the PEACE RIVER at Fort ST. JOHN

View of the PEACE RIVER at Fort ST. JOHN



VIEW OF THE PEACE RIVER AT FORT ST. JOHN

We were very happy when Sunday night at eleven o'clock, two hours after darkness had come in the early days of September, we paddled our canoe alongside the company's boat Peace River. Kind friends helped us unload. A cheery fire in the saloon, a cupful of tea, and welcoming smiles soon drove out the cold and stiffness accumulated since five in the morning. This was at the end of the telegraph line.

Will the North pass as our West has passed? Even when the Peace river is settled as it soon will be, there will remain a vast fur-bearing region, but that the peculiar types of white people and Indians with their present customs and manners can long survive is a question, and they make the real North.