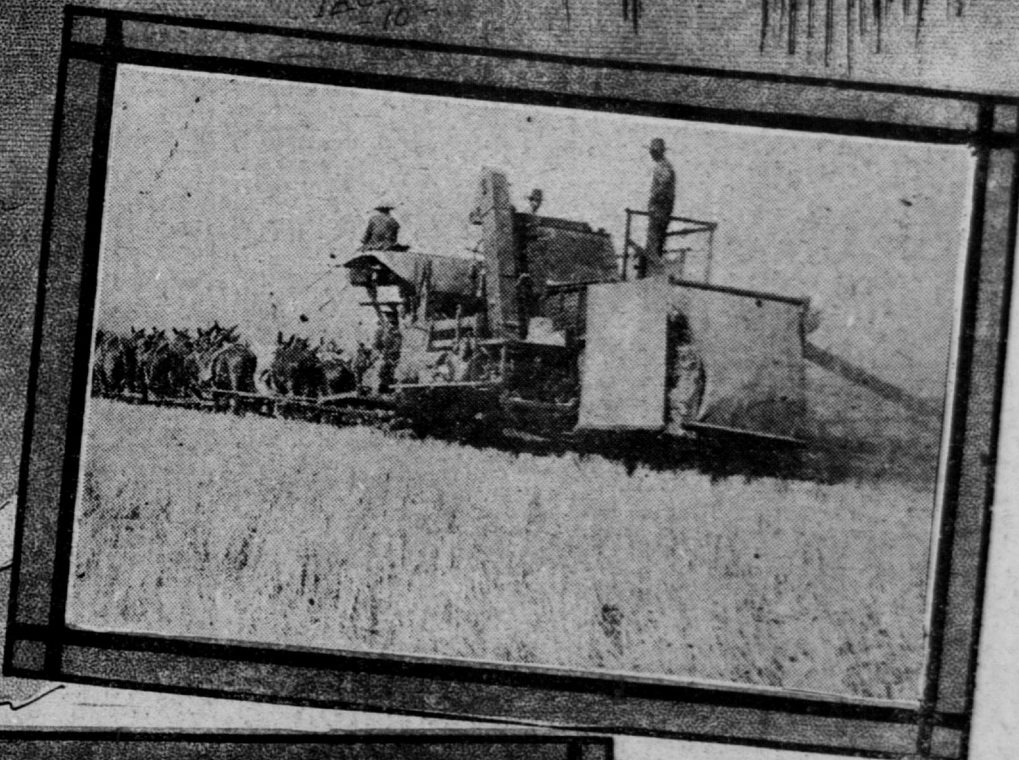


California Farming Machinery Invades the Fields of Palestine



A CAMEL DRAWN PLOW



AMERICAN HARVESTER AT WORK. 25 HORSE-POWER



REARING BY HAND IN PALESTINE

SPURRED on by the call of progress and urged by repeated petitions of the great commercial heads of the old world, Americans are planning a peaceful invasion of the Holy Land, the home of the rugged patriarchs of biblical history, that for centuries has resisted the march of modern improvement and is surrounded by almost the same conditions that existed in the days of David, Micah, Hosea and the rest of the ancient prophets.

No greater field for American industry, according to experts who have just returned from Palestine and Jerusalem exists. Constant missionary work of representatives of American business firms among the natives is beginning to bear fruit, and from an antagonistic attitude that has been unshakable for years, the people have adopted a receptive spirit and seem anxious and willing to learn new things.

American farming machinery, particularly the large thrashing and plowing machines such as are manufactured in California, will be the first of this country's mechanical products to be exported to the Holy Land. One of the largest manufacturers of harvesting machinery in the United States has already shipped to Palestine several carloads of the latest, most improved reapers, binders and harrows, besides samples of sowing and plowing machines.

The success of this new venture is being watched with undisguised interest by European competitors.

Farming methods used by the natives of Palestine and Jerusalem are most primitive. Centuries have made little change in the cultivation of the soil. There is still the crude plow of one handle, an iron shovel bolted to a crooked stick and drawn by a camel. There is still the cruel goad, a rod with a spike in one end that is used as an incentive to the dromedary to work faster, and the harvesting and gleaning methods and the thrashing

customs described in the book of Ruth still prevail.

Consul Thomas R. Wallace of Jerusalem recently wrote to Washington that conditions for the adoption of American machinery were never better than now.

Particularly in Judea, bordering on the sea, the land is rich and fertile and well adapted to all kinds of agricultural implements and machinery.

A campaign of education has been carried on for years by representatives of American firms among the natives of this section that has for its end the abolishing of the "communal system," the greatest menace the Holy Land offers to the admittance of modern improvements.

The "communal system" destroys every incentive for improvement of land. The original farm is subdivided among three or four persons, each person is free to do as he likes with his portion. In some of the communities each villager or family owns a portion of the farm lands. The original farm is subdivided among the survivors of each succeeding generation until it eventually is in very small patches.

Efforts are being made to induce the holders of these small farms to combine their interests and farm their tracts jointly, according to modern methods.

Under present conditions the poverty of the people is the greatest obstacle that American merchants will have to face. The farmers pledge their crops every year before they are harvested and are thus kept destitute.

The land, while fertile, does not produce one-tenth the size crops that it should because of the inability of the natives properly to till the soil.

The crude plows used penetrate but an inch or two beneath the surface, and no pretense is made to turn the ground over in smooth furrows.

What a marvelous change faces the country of King David and Solomon.

What a change will come into the lives of the simple minded natives with

the introduction of modern California farming machinery. To them it will be little short of magic to see the wonderful mechanism of the lifelike harvesters at work.

To the American farmer who has seen the labor in the fields reduced gradually, step at a time, year by year, the development of the farm machine is regarded merely as a matter of course, but to the native of Palestine, who will have the result of a century's brains and endeavor at his feet, the result will be different.

At reaping time the brown skinned natives have been accustomed to cutting the grain with hand sickles and carrying it away in armfuls to be thrashed later between clumsy logs studded with bits of iron. The chaff they have laboriously blown away by hand with huge fans.

Now their fields will be plowed by up to date tilling machines, the furrows planted by sowing machines, and when the crops have matured, along will come that remarkable and almost human invention, the reaping machine,

which will cut the heads of the ripe, golden grain, separate it from the husks and pack it into bags ready for shipping, and then bind the empty sheaves with wire, all during one trip across the fields. Thus the work that has taken the farmers of Palestine a month to accomplish will be done for them in a day.

The Americans have beaten other nations to Palestine with their machinery, but Germany and England have been working hard in Syria for years. The colonies established by the Jews and Germans in Syria are using up to date machinery with great success, and it is largely due to their example that Americans have recently had an easier time with the natives of Palestine.

East of the Jordan the soil is rich and productive, and the Jews are tilling it with the most improved plow-

ing machines. While they have not as yet imported the most expensive combination reapers, binders and thrashers they do use good substantial machinery, such as one would find on some of the smaller farms in our own land.

These are signs of advancement, and as Consul Wallace has said, should be sufficient indication for American business men to warrant the giving of more

attention to trade in the Holy Land.

The pictures used to illustrate this story are comparisons of conditions exactly as they exist. The plow drawn by the camels one can find any day in southern Palestine and all over the country the ox drawn harrow is as much in evidence as in the days when David tended his flock on the hillside.

The illustration of the natives reaping is also an exact picture of things as they are today in the Holy Land.

With the introduction of American farming machinery into the Holy Land and the destruction of the pernicious communal system would come a wondrous change into the lives of the poor peasants.

The people are intelligent though prejudiced against innovations. When once they understand the value of the new machinery it is safe to predict that much of the apathy which surrounds their country will be shaken off.

Of course, there is lots of opposition to the idea of modernizing Palestine, particularly from tourists and those who do not want the old biblical surroundings disturbed.

What more sacrilegious could be imagined than cutting down the famous cedars of Lebanon. Yet that is another thing planned by those who favor a regeneration of the Holy Land.

There is little being done along these lines, however. Cedar brings a high price in the English markets, and a short time ago a party of English and American capitalists at Jerusalem considered seriously the formation of a company for the purpose, but nothing came of it.