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Picker Problems

"Rust," to anyone north of the Mason-Dixon line is a common term for iron oxide but in points south, "Rust" is the word on the tip of every southern tongue—the Rust brothers, John and Mack, have invented a cotton picking machine!

Early in September, hundreds witnessed the first public demonstration of the Rust Picker. The picker moved along at 3 m. p. h.; its smooth, wet spindles combing into the plants, catching the white tufts from open bolls. From the spindles the cotton was mechanically stripped and blown into a collecting bag. Hour after hour the spindle-belts droned on like a swarm of bees. Bag after bellying bag poured out its load in a white cascade. Spectators crowded around to finger and scrutinize mechanically picked cotton.

Opinions from every angle have been voiced. Some say it is not efficient; wastes too much and gets too much

trash. Others say it will help the shortage of cotton pickers. Still others claim that for a first model it is a wonder. The voice heard farthest, however, shouts of the plight of the sharecroppers and the hundreds of pickers who, with the coming of the picker, will be thrown out of work. State anti-picker statutes have even been considered.

Beneath all this fanfare a few facts stand out. Under favorable conditions, the Rust Picker does pick cotton fast and cheaply. It costs \$1 per hour to run. On one of its trials it picked 400 pounds in an hour—just about the amount one handpicker could pick in four days. It doesn't injure plants but it does knock some of the cotton to the ground, leaves some open bolls unpicked, and picks up some leaves and trash.

Of the ten machines the Rust brothers have so far manufactured, two have been sold to U. S. S. R.

—*Time*.