

treatment which partially converts the fiber to cellulose acetate, similar to acetate rayon. The treated fabric, which looks like regular cotton and is fully as strong, absorbs much less moisture and swells less when wet than untreated fabric.

This partially acetylated fabric has been tested in water-softening bags and fish nets. And the same cotton fabric has been found resistant to heat and electricity. The useful life of a laundry press pad cover can be increased four to five times by partial acetylation, scientific tests show. This material can also be used for electrical tape to insulate wires.

Change Cotton's Properties

Individual textile companies have been vying with each other to produce interesting, lustrous cottons. Cotton fibers are being impregnated with resins to make them resist wrinkles, stay clean longer, dry faster and take on various surface designs. Pressure is being used to stamp permanent designs into the fabric.

Cotton has been teaming up with other materials, producing new, useful textiles. A rubber and pigment mixture keeps water out but lets through moisture vapor. Raincoats of this material would be comfortable to wear; hospital sheeting, utility clothes, children's snow suits and sleeping bags are other uses visualized.

Cotton has come to the rescue of wool-wearers who suffer from itchiness. Red

flannel is now being sandwiched between layers of cotton, giving added warmth and greater comfort.

Cotton is also being mixed with other fibers to produce more versatile textiles. No weaving is needed to make shoe cloths, guest towels and diapers when the cotton fibers are permanently bonded together with resin. Mixed with asbestos, cotton produces a more absorbent dishtowel. Combined with aluminum yarns, it produces a high-fashion fabric.

Although competition from synthetic fibers has increased rapidly during recent years, more cotton is still used in the United States than all other fibers put together. Cotton is being used in more ways than ever before—with still other uses constantly being found. The scientists who discovered these new uses are helping to keep King Cotton on his throne.

Cotton yarn that disappears in water, cotton that does not soil easily and comes clean quickly and cotton with a coating that keeps water out but lets moisture vapor through have been collected for you by Science Service. These and several other interesting cottons, along with details of their manufacture and suggested experiments, are included in the kit which you can secure for the nominal fee of 50 cents. Write Science Service, 1719 N St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for the New Cotton Developments kit.

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ETHNOLOGY

In Hawaii It's Menehune

► CHILDREN OF Hawaii have their Menehune, just as Europeans and mainlanders have their dwarfs, pixies and elves. They are small creatures, who work at night and are invisible, except to children, in the daytime. They are credited with having built many stone temples, fish ponds and waterways.

Some people believe that the stories about the Menehune have their origin in reality, a real and very early race of people who may have been the "kama'aina" or the original native-born of the islands. All others, according to this theory, including those we know as Hawaiians today, would then be "malihini"—strangers, foreigners, newcomers.

Dr. Katharine Luomala is an anthropologist, an associate professor of the University of Hawaii. She has written a paper about the Menehune, delving scientifically into the origins of these little folk. However, she apologizes for being scientific about them. She says:

"Those who regard the Menehune as their favorite characters in Hawaiian mythology may resent any attempt to analyze these appealing little beings, and may say

that anyone who would dissect a hapless Menehune caught in the scientific net would pick the wings off butterflies. With bowed head, the scientist can only point out in defense that he is not satisfied with mere contemplation of the wonders of the world but inevitably finds this admiration leading to analysis."

Dr. Luomala has done a thorough job of picking the wings off the butterflies.

Her conclusions are that the Menehune never existed in any real form. The name, she says, probably reached the Hawaiian Islands from central Polynesia.

On some islands in the central Pacific, variations of the name were associated with the people who did the work, with the slaves. This was not originally true in Hawaii where the "Makaainana" performed the labor on the stone temples and fishponds. But, as the Hawaiians, who did not write before the missionaries came, forgot who built them, they credited the little people with the job.

"There is nothing to prove they were ever real people," Dr. Luomala concludes. "They are the products of human imagination."

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