

Art. II.—TRUE REMEDY FOR THE EMBARRASMENTS OF COTTON PLANTERS
AT THE SOUTH AND SOUTH-WEST.

THE interest of these sections, are in a manner identical, their crops and mode of cultivation being similar, the only difference to be discerned is found in the greater productiveness, at the present time, of the soil throughout the latter. The agricultural prospects and the doings of the planter will be considered more in reference to the latter.

Good men and true have devoted much attention to the agriculture of this country; they have given good and wise precepts; they have striven to change the present unpleasant state of affairs; and most assuredly have their labors been effectual. There may not be any very marked change, but there has been much improvement in the mode of managing an estate, which will in due time bear an abundant harvest. That the best is not done, that the precepts have not had full consideration, any one may see for himself; but no reasonable man could expect to change a routine of almost half a century's standing, in a few months: to change the habits of a people requires almost an age; to see the change has certainly begun, is sufficient; and to show it, witness the sales of hay, pork, beef, mutton, wool, fruit, etc., etc., from Mississippi, within the past eighteen months. The present price of cotton is too low for the cotton planter; he cannot afford to make cotton when not yielding over from \$100 to \$140 per hand. It matters not how this state of agricultural depression was brought about; whether it be caused by the tariff, whether by the banks loaning freely and thus causing increased product, or how; the important matter is not to quarrel about who, or what caused, but like working-men apply the means to effect a change. Can a change be effected? What means should be applied? and when should they be applied? are questions open for investigation.

A writer in the third number of the Commercial Review, answers

them at length ; whether satisfactory to the people or not, it is not necessary to say. To strike at the root of the evil, it would be well to examine the whole matter, as the lawyer would his case, or the physician his patient, not content to rely on a few statements.

The planter is regretting his peculiar hard lot ; his negroes are worked full hours, and he receives a bare pittance of the returns made to the manufacturer or to the sugar planter : he plants more cotton, works his negroes harder, drives all day and part of the night, and yet he complains. Like the nostrum vender, he will not be convinced that calomel is killing his patient, but he gives larger and larger doses. What is the result ? He is compelled to pay doctors larger bills for attention on the sick, caused by over work : he has to pay to Kentucky larger prices for mules, and horses, and hemp, the price being increased by the increased demand ; he wants more meat and more bread, owing to his not having time to make them : he has to make a greater show of wealth, as his poor neighbors who make less cotton, and more meat, and bread, and clothing, and colts, and stock generally, are beginning to buy conveyances for their families to ride to church in : he turns off an overseer every few months, and finally laments, until he is weary, over his fate.

Should such a man be advised to hold on to his crop for better prices ? Apply to the legislature to give premiums ? Make less cotton ? Build up manufactories ? This has been done again and again. What then counsel him to do ? Examine the case well, and let a planter who has long watched the course of events, act as a kind of mentor, while you are making an examination. Do you not see that on this plantation the negroes are overworked, although they are fed high ; you see no small children ; you hear not the cheerful song nor the laugh that comes from the happy negro. You will also please to observe the beautiful quality of the hay, put up in handsome square bales ; these bales are from Ohio, and good hay it is. Do you mark the sacks that are lying there ; they once contained corn that you will perceive was from a flat-boat, if you will lift a sack to your nose. Here, sir, is as neat an axe-helve as was ever made in Connecticut ; good bridles and good collars, good backbands, all, they cost a mere trifle. You will find excellent Lowell and good linsey, it being cheaper to buy than to make ; and besides, there is nothing saved even by working at this kind of work on wet days. You will find yonder a fine, sleek, well-conditioned horse ; he belongs to the overseer ; and near at hand you see the rough outside of a very good carriage-horse ; corn is too scarce to feed him with. Ah ! and there goes the planter ; he has just returned from a political stump harangue, where the planters have been discussing the merits of the candidates for the next Presidency. Shall we visit the house, and see the china and the silver, and the silk and lace, and extra servants ? No, no ! we will not enter into the sanctum of the injured one—he is an injured man. The merchant and the manufacturer have conspired to put him down. England determines to take his slaves from him ; he is desponding, and cannot for the soul of him go to work like the manufacturer, or the merchant, but expects the “ good old times ” to return again. Have you seen enough ? Can you see what is first requisite ?

Let the planter set to work himself, and turn off his overseer; let him make his bread, his meat, raise a few colts, and hay to feed them on; let him increase the quantity of corn and forage until he can spare a little; let him take the interest in his own business that the merchant or manufacturer must who expects success; let him learn his sons that idleness is the "road to ruin;" let him teach his daughters that they are not dolls or milliner girls, but that they are the future makers or marrers of this beautiful republic; let him ever remember the old saying, "the master's footsteps are manure to his land," and we think he will have less cause to repine, and more cause to think that his "lot is cast in happy places."

Good, very good, sir; you have now struck at the root of the evil, and it is to be hoped that you will enter more minutely into the particulars how all these matters should be effected.

The questions in the latter part of the second paragraph are answered in a summary manner above; the answers follow as evidently as cause precedes its effect; unless there was a remedy there would be folly in talking of it. If the remedy be not found in diminishing expenses, practising frugality and industry, and thus, of course, diminishing the amount of cotton for sale, then there is no use to search for a remedy. And if these things can and ought to be done, then promptness should be the watchword. The merchant who controls his millions, is found attending to his business; true, he has his clerks and porters, but he is not the less diligent. The lawyer is busy with his "books" and "papers" all day and late at night. The physician cannot spare the time from his "prescriptions" and his "visits." The manufacturer, ever working "short hours," has to examine into the "state of trade," or he will lose his "market." Why then should the planter, above all others, be permitted to pass his days and nights in listless idleness. Has he exemption from "by the sweat of thy face, thou shalt earn thy daily bread;" or, "he that will not work, neither shall he eat?" There is one thing certain, the planters of the South and South-west must give up sloth and idleness; they must take the lesson taught by Hercules to the wagoner,—“put your shoulders to the wheel.” Besides this they must pursue a more mixed course of husbandry; they have relied long enough on the one thing; it is high time another course was pursued.

That manufactories would benefit this portion of the United States there is not a shadow of doubt; that legislative aid, directed to developing the latent facilities of the country would, is evidently plain. That making less cotton would enhance the price, is highly reasonable. But were all these done, and the present practice pursued, the improvement would be delusive. The redress to be effectual must commence at home—the improvement, to be valid and permanent, must start at the planter's own home.