

rations." As to his clothes, he laughed, and pointed to them, and really he might have traded with advantage with any scare crow. When he was sick "befo' de wah" he was cared for: now he and "de ole woman and de chillun" must look after "dereselfs." "When I wanted a dolla' den, my ole Massa always done give it to me. Now I aint nebber seen a dolla' for more'n a year." One expression used by this old negro—and he looked much older than he was—particularly struck me. Looking over at the cotton pickers he said, "Befo' de wah we used to sing at cotton pickin: you nebber hear dat no mo." In conversation with others I found that this absence of song in the fields of the free South had been noted by others besides this negro.

Most of the farming in the new South, is done on what is known as the mortgage system. That is, the farmers give a mortgage or lien on their growing crop to a merchant and get provisions, etc., in advance. The system appears to work just about as a similar system did among the Jews in the time of Nehemiah. I was told of the experience of one negro under this system. For years he had toiled on his farm, only to find that the whole crop fell just a little short of paying his account with the merchant. At last came a year when he had a bale of cotton more than usual, and he took his crop to the store only to find, that even with the extra bale, there was only five cents coming to him. "Fore de Lawd, Massa Jones," he said to the merchant, "I done thought dere would a been mo' dan dat, and I reckoned ter buy a dress for de ole woman dis year, and some shoes for de chillen; dey aint had none for tree year now, I spec I can't do it dis year. Sure you's made no mistake in dat count, Massa Jones?" "No," said the merchant, "you can examine it for yourself." "Oh!

I spose its all right," said the negro, "I don't know nuffin' 'bout 'counts but it pears ter me just dis way, nought to nought an' figger to figger, all fer de white man and none fer de nigger."

But the poverty and the inability to make accounts square at the end of the year, is not confined to the blacks in the South; with but few exceptions the white farmers are but little better off. Many of them have told me that they are steadily but surely falling behind, and this though they work hard and economise in every possible way. Yet the South is a beautiful country with fertile soil, perfect climate and illimitable natural resources. Strange that in a land so fair and with such boundless promise of reward for industry, there should be such hopeless poverty. Such things do not come from chance. I have seen shallow Northern writers attempt to explain it away, by blaming it, as I have said, on the indolence of the people. I know that I speak truly when I assert it is not due to any lack of physical or moral stamina on the part of the Southern people, white or black.

During the first years after the war the South prospered. Though the planters returned often to ruined homes, and though they had lost thousands upon thousands of dollars of slave property, they did not lose courage or hope. They set to work with a will to retrieve their shattered fortunes. Though their capital was gone they borrowed money. Prices were good and the interest was easily paid. In the meantime the emancipated negroes found their labor in demand at good wages, and they earned money and saved it: many of them bought little farms, paying part down, and with excellent prospects of meeting future payments with good wages and good prices they were prosperous and happy. Freedom did indeed seem to them a blessing with-