

NEGRO LABOR IN THE COTTON FIELDS

But the negroes are leaving the cotton fields very fast. They are migrating to the cities by the thousand, and it will soon be a serious problem with the planters as to how they will cultivate and gather their crops. The negro loves a life of indolent pleasure, and this he can find in the cities. Those who want to work find plenty of it in the public works that are being erected in all the Southern towns.

There is no laborer on earth better suited to the cotton fields than the Southern ducky—he of the black skin and the brawny muscle; but, though the work likes him, he does not like the work. Efforts have been made to supplant him with the Italian immigrant, but he is not the equal of the negro in this work. The negro is possessed of an amount of endurance almost equalling that of a mule. He will stand being driven, and is not in his element unless the overseer is standing over him and heaping invective at him at the rate of a mile a minute. When well fed and properly looked after his endurance will never lapse.

As it is at present, the negro can earn enough money in a week to live in idleness for the remainder of the month. The poor whites, being to a large extent in the cotton mills, do not take his place during his idle days.