

equal advantage. The watermelon is a proved experiment, as far as its saccharine qualities and productiveness are the question, but I am waiting in most anxious faith for the trial of the muskmelon, for I have an idea that it will be the best sugar producer after cane, with the advantage of living in a colder climate and on land too light for the cane. If I am right in this opinion it will introduce a new and profitable culture in other sections than the valley of the Rio Grande.

Connected with this is a sad illustration of border life. Our faithful, industrious Francisco, who had planted a line of melons a mile long around the corn-field, for fruit and experiments, was a redeemed peon. His boy Jo., who remained in bondage, ran away and joined his father. Forgetful that he might be taken for his son's default, Francisco crossed the river on some business, and was caught up and peonized with his wife. The boy went over to condole with his parents, or offer himself back to service, and they have caught him too; so the whole family are now returned to Slavery by their own want of prudence. CORA MONTGOMERY.

SOUTH WESTERN TEXAS.

Production of Wine and Sugar--Peonage on the Border.

Correspondence of The Tribune.

EAGLE PASS, July 8, 1851.

The valley of the Bravo is favorable to two great staples of production, to an extent yet undreamed of in the calculations of fountains of wealth. Sugar and wine will be the peculiar and abundant offering of this vast region. The soil and climate corresponds with the best wine districts of Spain, and will not return a less liberal harvest of grapes and gold. Our neighbors at the flourishing German settlement of Castoville are planting vineyards, and thence they will radiate the grape culture all over Western Texas, and I grieve that none of their choice products will speak for the Lone Star State at the World's Convention. The vintage of some other States will be there, however, and if candid allowance is made for the want of age in the wine, and the imperfection of first experiments, it will be conceded that the children of the Union can drink her health in the generous growth of her own vines.

But I look in vain for a display of sugars, and our infant sugar interest is no contemptible feature in our domestic trade and home consumption. There are several varieties of sugar beside that extracted from the cane, which can be profitably manufactured in the United States, if from war or any other cause it is desirable to be independent of other nations for that article of daily abundant and universal use among the Americans.

Of these ranks first the delicious sugar of the maple, whose healthy and delicate sweets are almost unknown in Europe.

Then comes pumpkin sugar, as simple and economical, or rather more so, than the beet sugar, which France is finding so available in her domestic industry. Then we have beet sugar, and corn-stalk sugar, like the two last, only to be made profitable on a large scale and with adequate machinery. There are localities in the Northern States in which the soil, amplitude of intelligence and corps of fit laborers would make the culture of the pumpkin sugar desirable. The North American Phalanx—to whom all prosperity—have the soil and the men to make it a profitable branch of their system. I trust when the next World's Fair is mustered under United States auspices, (and to do it well, the American Institute has but to take it in hand, and make Mr. Barnum one of their Managers,) that we shall have a fine collection of specimen sugars. Three kinds I have named, beside the luscious maple and all known cane sugars, but there is a sixth kind sleeping in darkness, that only waits a kindly introduction to become of great importance to us on this border river, and to the Union, and that is *melon sugar*. There is no limit to the quantities the Rio Grande country is capable of producing, and an acre of melons will yield as many gallons of syrup, and of course we may presume sugar also, as the average yield of the cane fields of Louisiana. The apparatus for crushing melons is simpler and cheaper than for the cane mills, as a common cider press, propelled by mule or horse power, will make 500 barrels of the melon juice, which will yield 5,000 pounds of sugar, in a month. The sugar is sweet, finer in flavor and color than the Mexican cane sugar, and will command here ten cents a pound to the producer. I do not know (it remains to be tried) how many hands would be necessary to boil and finish off the sugar with the necessary apparatus, but it may be observed that Mexican laborers can be hired and rationed at less cost than plantation slaves can be maintained, if to the interest on the purchase-price of the slaves we add the cost of their regular food and clothing. On the Mexican side of the river five dollars a month and an allowance of a peck and a half of corn a week for food is a fair rate. We have always paid more than twice that for our permanent servants, but of late we have repeated proffers of good shepherds and field hands for six and seven dollars a month, with the addition of meat and coffee rations, which the Americans have made the custom, and therefore a social law at Eagle Pass.

Our whole-hearted border man Baptiste has made the trial of the watermelon syrup in comparison with the cane juice, and the result satisfies me that melon sugar can be made a regular and profitable item of American agriculture. In all that wide belt of Southern States in which cane sugar is of doubtful or impossible culture, the more hardy melon can take its place. There are immense districts in Virginia and North Carolina in which no other crop can be raised to