

successful plan was to suffer a small patch to remain uncut, and run to seed, these, being very caducous, fell to the ground as fast as they ripened. The earth was, in autumn, covered with straw to preserve the seeds from frost. On being removed and the ground raked over in spring the seeds vegetated and the little plants were set out in rows. When, however, the Egyptian Millet was introduced, the seeds of which were easily preserved, I substituted it for the Guinea Grass. The true Guinea Grass is a tropical plant—has a delicate fibrous root like the wheat and rice, and not tuberous, like the variety which now, very improperly, goes under the same name. The latter has also a light stripe running longitudinally along the midrib of the leaves, by which it may easily be distinguished. There are many other characters which it is scarcely necessary to notice here, that draw a broad line of separation between these two very distinct species. As the grass recently cultivated under the name of Guinea Grass is a different species, it is right and proper that our present cultivated grass should not usurp a name to which it is not legitimately entitled. All honest men prefer to be called by their proper names and an *alias* always awakens suspicion. Our Southern planters would be laughed at were they to send specimens of this variety to Europe as the Guinea Grass. I will, before I close this letter, give further reasons why this erroneous name should no longer be retained.

2. What is it? In an address I delivered at Columbia, S. C., during the meeting of the Legislature in 1853, I added a note on the Grasses, in which I incidentally referred to this variety, named Guinea Grass, which I had then not seen, in these words: "I am inclined to think that the productive grass under the above name, spoken of by gentlemen in the interior, as producing no seed and is not injured by frost, can scarcely be Guinea Grass, and must be some other species." The opportunity has now been afforded to me of proving that my conjectures were well founded.

To save our Cotton planters from falling into hysterics, on having the ghost of an old enemy conjured up before their affrighted imaginations, I will premise by saying that it is one of the most productive grasses that has, as yet, been cultivated in our Southern country, and that there is no danger of its spreading in the Cotton fields.

The grass is a distinct and, evidently, a permanent variety of the paniced Millet (*Sorghum halapense*) and a native of Nubia, Syria and Greece, and is, in fact, a variety which has sprung out of the old and much hated and mis-named Means Grass.

When this grass was originally introduced, I pursued the plan I usually adopt under similar circum-

stances. I first endeavored to find out its name, and the country in which it had originated. After much trouble, I found it described in a single line in Linnæus' 12th Edition. (*Holcus halapense*, in Tom. 3, page 669.) I next submitted it to the test of an experiment. I planted it in a square in my town garden. The soil was rich and the product was immense—equal to that of the best Guinea Grass or Egyptian Millet. It possessed, however, two properties that prevented me from recommending it. The seeds came up wherever they were dropped, and the tubers threw out runners, like the Nut Grass, and extended in one instance, by my own measurement, to the distance of thirty feet. In deference to the very reasonable fears of my neighbors who were threatened, as they erroneously supposed, by an enemy more annoying than the Nut Grass or Canada Thistle, I had the whole bed rooted up, which was no difficult task. My neighbors were as thankful for the riddance, as my pig was for an abundant supply of his choice food. One other slight digging up of stragglers exterminated the last root; so, having only kept it for an experiment, as a man keeps a rattlesnake or a pet bear for his own amusement, I could look the terror-stricken gardeners and planters in the face, and say with MACBETH to the ghost of BANQUO:

"Thou canst not say I did it;

"Never shake thy gory locks at me."

The notes of execration that were re-echoed from the seaboard to the mountains, against this pest, had scarcely subsided when a new discovery was announced. It was a grass possessing all the abundant growth of the Means Grass, having neither seed or runners, which was restricted to the bed where it was planted. This was a desideratum. Now for the name. As it bore some resemblance to the Guinea Grass, that name was improperly applied to it. It was stated that the true Guinea Grass had been planted by the side of it, and that, in time, all were alike. The same results were produced in my own garden with the Means Grass by the side of the Guinea Grass. The secret was that the latter was killed in winter and the former lived. There was no blending, but a supplanting of species.

When the specimens of this peculiar grass were sent to me by my friend, Col. Sumner, I was absent from home; the labels had been misplaced and I had no opportunity of examining it until yesterday, when I saw it in a lot at Atlanta, cultivated by Mr. Peters, from which I was supplied with specimens of the roots, stalks, and the infertile florets.

My first examinations were directed to the inquiry whether it might not prove to be a hybrid between the Means Grass and the Guinea Grass, or some oth-