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POSTAGE FREE.

The Field.

Alsike Clover.

The following is an extract from a farm journal:—
 "23rd May, 1868.—Made the weekly inspection of the farm. Went first to the Colt Ground, where the span of colts, now three years old, are growing into the future team. This place consists of four acres, fenced in with Black Ash pole or log fence, so high that they cannot jump over, and so strong that they cannot break through. This is the true way to prevent colts being breachy. The pasture is very rich, and is more than will be necessary to support the colts during the season.

"I noticed the Alsike clover particularly, which is now about five inches high. It possesses one unusual peculiarity, viz., that of doing best in the holes covered or nearly covered with water during the winter and spring. No doubt this is a valuable property as compared with red clover, which will not stand such hardship. Another thing to recommend its use is, that before timothy or red clover is ripe enough to cut for hay, the top flowers of the alsike are ripe, and shed their seed, which seem to catch at once and grow, as I find vast numbers of young plants only two inches high, the result of last year's laying. Our colt pasture is an uneven piece of land, and the roots and stumps not out sufficiently to enable us to level it yet."

This property of withstanding water in the winter and spring renders it a very useful plant for undrained farms, and reminds us of the native place of the Alsike clover, which was first discovered in the ditches of the fortification of "Alsike," in Sweden.

Prolificacy of the Thistle.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:
 Sir, I have known you return your thanks for specimens of ripe strawberries, forwarded to you for trial; but the enclosed specimen of seedling thistles is entirely wanting in those mouth-watering qualities of which a ripe strawberry is so eminent a provocative, yet it may be of much more importance when gravely considered in its threatening aspect. My object in sending you these is to demonstrate the fallacy of Peter Shisler's assertion, published in a recent number of your journal, where he randomly asserts

"Not one in a million of the seeds of the thistle grow." I have seen them so thick on ploughed ground this month that you might count fully 150 to the square foot. The bunch in the centre, with the thread around them, is just as they were lifted, and too thick to count; the others are selected of different stages of growth, to show what they are. With your permission I will give a rejoinder to Peter Shisler's letter in your next issue, over the signature "Publícola."

W. BURGESS.

Mimico, May 29th. 1868.
 NOTE BY ED. C. F.—We gratefully acknowledge the compliment paid us by our correspondent in believing that we feel no "mouth-watering" after thistles, and assure him that we hold them in utter aversion. We have caused the specimen of seedlings forwarded



us to be engraved life-size, to give ocular demonstration of the prolificacy of this detestable weed, and to point an argument for stirring the soil with cultivator, harrow and horse-hoe, in order to secure its destruction. It is easy to exterminate weeds in the early and feeble stages of their growth. Merely a disturbance of the soil then suffices to destroy them, whereas when once they are rooted, it is a matter of extreme difficulty to get rid of them. We hardly think there is ground for controversy between our present and former correspondent. Speaking in a general, hyperbolic sort of way, one may say that not one in a million of these seeds vegetates, for it is quite evident that only a small proportion grows, inasmuch as a single thistle plant will throw upwards of 11,000 seeds, according to the estimate of Dr. Lindley, given in our last issue, under the head of "Weeds." We cordially second the most fierce and furious crusade against them. The publication of actual experience in attempts to get rid of this troublesome pest, though the statements may sometimes perplex by their apparent contradiction, cannot fail to be of service, and ultimately lead to effective methods of destruction.

Chinese Yam.

Dioscorea Batatas

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

Sir,—Having fully investigated the character and merits of this yam. I have some positions to announce in regard to it, which I should have much hesitation about advancing, if I were not well assured of their triumphant verification by my countrymen. I assert, that this esculent, by its concentration of each useful property, transcends in importance every other edible vegetable of the earth, and that it is destined to supersede the tropical and unreliable potato in all northern climates. The combination of its admirable properties as food for man, constitute it also the most estimable vegetable food, and the most nutritious aliment, for man and domestic stock, which God and nature, in their all-pervading beneficence and benign provision, have bestowed upon the inhabitants of our globe. I shall discuss all these points on a future occasion in the ample sense to which they are entitled. The present article is intended solely to impart such practical facts and advice in relation to the plant as will aid those who are now commencing its culture. I desire, however, to make known that there are more than fifty varieties of various colors and forms,

and varying in length from seven inches to two feet.
 CHARACTERISTIC POINTS.—This yam is a native of the northern limits of the temperate zone, and will flourish in the coldest regions of our country, and of the British Territories, and will endure, everywhere, the winters in the open ground. Its produce is more than double the crop of any potato, and it never rots. It will flourish best on the now useless sandy lands of New Jersey and Long Island, and of the entire coast range, and it will also succeed on any other soil but a stiff clay. It does not require replanting annually, but reproduces abundant crops from the fragments and small tubers that are left in the earth. There can be no fragrant, however diminutive, that will not vegetate. From tubers, the roots attain ten to twelve inches in length, and weigh four to six ounces. From sections of the root, such as used for the regular crop, the roots attain eighteen to twenty-four inches in length, and weigh from half a pound to one and a half pounds, and often more. A plantation of this yam, is in China termed "a Permanent Magazine of Food," and the roots may be dug fresh for use daily, from early spring to winter, thus furnishing new yams continuously. It