

think the pendulum is swinging too far the other way. One party says, "I have a little field back of the barn where I think I will try it"; and another, "I think I will wait another year." No field is too large, and a year is too long to wait for what is called "one of God's richest gifts to man." Time is too short to wait a year before reaping any benefits from this best of all legumes, and you can make no mistake in growing all you can use of it, and some to sell.

CRITICISED FOR ITS MERITS.

The old saying that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing," is well illustrated when we hear some say, "It is hard to get rid of," or, "It is difficult to plow it up." Instead of this being an objection, it is really to its credit. The great objection to most of the clovers is that they are too easily got rid of. This is one of the disappointing things about red clover, one has to reseed too often, and the fact of alfalfa going down deep into the soil makes it all the more valuable, as it not only better withstands a prolonged drouth, but it gathers nourishment from soil not reached by the clovers. As for plowing it up, one has only to go the right way about it, but I would never think of plowing up a good field of alfalfa. I say "a good field." Of course, if the soil is poor, and first sowing not profitable, plow it down, and you have the best of a start for better things next time.

THE MOST PROFITABLE FARM CROP.

I was talking to a friend the other day who has about twenty acres under cultivation, and asked him why he did not seed down a certain field with alfalfa. He replied, "Oh, I want that for a change of crop with my others." This may sound reasonable, but what is to hinder one from having half of his farm in alfalfa, and then use the remainder for changes desirable? Or, there is nothing to hinder one, unless he wishes to sow fall wheat, seeding down half of a field with alfalfa, and have a rotation of spring grains and roots or corn on the other half. He can then pasture the third or last growth of the alfalfa. I would never plow down a good field of alfalfa for any rotation of crop that I know of. It costs time and money to get a good "catch" of either grasses or clover, and so long as they are good I let them stay. Over ten years ago, my hired man said, "Is it not time that top field was plowed up?" I replied, "Not yet awhile." Some twenty years ago this field was seeded down to a mixture of about fourteen different kinds of grasses and seven different kinds of clovers. It was in the days we were told what permanent pastures were doing in England. Well, this field has remained unplowed ever since, and so long as it will support from two to three cows to the acre for most of the pasture season, it will probably remain as it is, unless to seed it down with alfalfa. I think this is the only thing that will tempt me to plow it up; and why should I? I have seeded down other fields since with mixtures (not quite so many kinds, however), but never so satisfactorily as this one. The alfalfa, however, solves the problem, and I never expect to seed down to permanent pasture again. I mention this, as the question of alfalfa and permanent pasture combined has recently been asked about in "The Farmer's Advocate." Even the alfalfa, of which there was a sprinkling, and whose roots, when digging a drain, were found down deep in the clay, has long since disappeared.

ALFALFA COMPARED WITH RED CLOVER.

With this preface, I will return to the subject of another year's experience with alfalfa, and, that I may be better understood, I will refer first to Field No. 1. Some five years ago this field was seeded to a mixture of grasses and clovers. In the mixture there was between four and five pounds of alfalfa seed to the acre. As a precaution, when sowing, the grasses were kept separate from the clovers. The man who had charge of this got along very well with the grasses, but the stock of clovers was exhausted when a little more than three-fourths of the field was done. As I could not procure any more of the alfalfa without sending to the city, which would mean too long delay, the remaining portion of the field was finished with red clover. I felt sorry at the time, and for a year or two after, but I am beginning to see that, like many other things in our lives that have seemed against us, it was a blessing in disguise. One reason is that, as a consequence, the other part of the field had more alfalfa than I intended, and, although not as much as I would sow if doing it again, was sufficient to show me what it would do if given half a chance. The other reason is I have been better able to compare it with red clover, for example. I might say that the only part of that field that is profitable to-day is the part that has the alfalfa. I am only waiting to plow it all down and reseed to all alfalfa.

A BOON IN A DRY SEASON.

Last season was a good one to show what alfalfa would do in a dry year. It came out with flying colors. One might almost say that the only green things around, for a while last

summer, were the two fields of alfalfa. I hardly know how I would have got along without them. Like the tree described by the Psalmist, whose leaf did not wither, so the alfalfa. The fact of its roots going down deep (some say as deep as the soil) accounts for its greenness and growth in the time of drouth. This alone should be a sufficient inducement for every farmer to have some—yes, a lot of it. I thought many a time what a blessing a ten or twenty-acre field of this would have been to many a farmer last year. They could have retained their herd, and the monthly check from the cheese factory or creamery would have increased, as prices were better. But this is only one of the many good things to be said about alfalfa.

THAT CHOICE, EARLY-CUT HAY.

Usually, I cut this field about the middle of June, but last season was a late one, and it was not cut until the 2nd of July. I hesitated doing it then, as there was only a stalk here and there in bloom, but I was between the horns of a dilemma. If it remained longer I would be short of pasture; if cut then, I might be of hay. Fine weather and more time just then helped me to decide. I felt sorry, as I saw a lot of it only half-grown, and I said to myself, "For once in my life I have cut my hay too soon." I am feeding this hay now, and I sorrow no more, and I wonder if anyone yet, when he came to feed his hay, regretted that it was cut so soon. I think not. I believe that ninety per cent. of hay is left uncut too long. Alfalfa will help to overcome this evil.

LOSS BY LATE CUTTING.

There is no reasonable excuse for leaving it to grow woody, as, the sooner cut, the more to follow, four weeks being the usual time between the first and second cutting. I have always pastured the third growth. I left the first cutting late one year; I thought I would wait another week. Then the weather became unfavorable, and before it could be touched another week had gone, and, as a consequence, no amount of grain ration made up the loss. We all know what grass will do as a milk producer. Well, the nearer the hay can come to this, the better, for milk, at least. With alfalfa, I have not found it difficult to cure, as, even when cut early, there is sufficient strength or "body" in it to dry well, not settling down, as with grasses, for example, and, as a further encouragement, rain does not spoil early-cut hay as it does that cut later. When one has much to cut, there must of necessity be some left possibly longer than it should be. When this is the case, feed the early-cut to all young growing stock and dairy cows, and reserve the later-cut for the working horses. Some maintain that there is more strength, because it will not digest so easily or remain in the stomach longer, but I do not believe it. When feeding early-cut alfalfa hay, we do not do as I see so many with timothy, —enough under the horses' feet and thrown out with the manure to half keep them if fed with alfalfa; neither does it need to be fed so liberally that they have some always before them.

ALFALFA THE BEST FEED FOR ALL KINDS OF STOCK.

Mr. Wing makes the statement that there is no one thing so good for the working horse as alfalfa, the horse requiring much less grain when fed this, and says he has fed no other hay for many years, both to working teams and driving horses, with mares and foals, and has yet to observe the first instance of evil result, but he gives this caution: "Even working teams may be fed too large amounts of alfalfa hay, and it should be steadily borne in mind that early-cut and well-cured alfalfa is nearly as rich, pound for pound, as wheat bran, so that to feed too great an amount of it is not merely wasteful, but puts an undue strain upon the excretory organs to eliminate the unnecessary food substance from the tissues." It is a pleasure feeding such hay, because you know that it is not necessary to give an animal all it will eat to know that it has been fed, especially when one sees the results. No need to make "hay tea," as some have done when short of milk for the young calf, for they soon eat and thrive on it, as I know by experience. Naturally enough, every animal likes it, taking it in preference to anything else in the hay line. Last winter, a June colt was fed this, along with a little pulped turnips and a taste of oats in the shaf, and the way he grew was proof enough of its feeding value. This winter he is getting no grain whatever, and, if we are to judge by his appearance and actions, alfalfa is all that is claimed for it.

FEED ALFALFA AND SPARE THE OAT BIN.

Do you know, we have heard and read so much about oats for horses that some of us have almost come to the conclusion that they cannot live without them. I never yet heard a man, when praising a horse he might have as being easy-kept, but who always includes oats in his ration. I believe that alfalfa solves the problem of keeping a team of horses profitably on a small farm. Who is not familiar with many—yes, very

many—who, after feeding grain to their horses, have none left to sell?

THE BEST MILK PRODUCER.

Alfalfa is good for milk. Not only have I a proof of it every day from feeding it, but I will give you my experience from the pasture standpoint. The last season, with field No. 1, three weeks after cutting the cows were turned on. I expected an increase in the flow of milk in from 24 to 36 hours at least, but it was not till about the fourth day that it was particularly noticeable. I explain it in this way: Although stock like alfalfa, they take grass in preference. You will remember that about one-fifth of this field had no alfalfa. It took them about four days to clean up everything but alfalfa, and it was not until after they began eating it that much increase was manifest. After it was well eaten down, the field was closed for some two or three weeks, and the stock turned in again, with precisely the same results. Can we account for this in any other way? The fact that stock do not take greedily to alfalfa at first is much in its favor. There is practically no danger from bloating when eating it. After the dry pasture the last summer, I said to myself, "I must watch, and not leave the cows too long on the alfalfa the first day." My fears were ungrounded, as, before I arrived they were quietly grazing in another place, and apparently had not touched the alfalfa. One must not get the idea from this that they do not like it, but, for pasture, they will frequently take grass in preference, especially at first. If you are hesitating about building a silo, possibly growing alfalfa may help you to do without this, as we are told that it will yield, by actual weight, as much as corn. You can certainly make dairying profitable without a silo by growing alfalfa.

MUCH FEED FROM SMALL AREA.

Alfalfa solves the problem of keeping a lot of stock on a small place. Those who have tried this know that there is no difficulty during the early part of the season, when growth is rapid, but when dry weather sets in, or, later on, when the grass ceases to grow, then "there is the rub," and we want corn or something to help out, or we will have to begin feeding in October. With alfalfa, by pasturing the third crop, we have something that will run the stock into winter quarters in the best possible shape, and, with plenty of it, we can easily dispense with the corn.

BEST TO SEED WITHOUT A NURSE CROP.

Field No. 2 was seeded down to all alfalfa last spring. When seeding with permanent-pasture mixtures, I always sowed without a nurse crop. Once, when sowing timothy and red clover, I did so along with rye, cutting it early. As nurse crops go, it was excellent, giving an abundance of good feed. I hesitated whether to sow a nurse crop or not, but decided not to, thinking that what I missed in grain would be made up in hay in that year and in those to follow. The field was plowed the previous fall, and, as I believed it to be one-third better than the average field, I could do with one-third less seed, and sowed, therefore, 17 pounds to the acre. It was sown broadcast by hand, followed by one stroke with the harrow. As a week had gone by, and no rain "in sight," it was rolled. There was an occasional shower, but it was not to amount to much. When sowing, I took the precaution to divide the field into four parts, as near as I could, and the seed likewise, so that, before going very far, we could tell whether we were sowing too much or too little, profiting by my former experience in this line. To say that it was "a good catch," is saying too little, and, despite the dry weather, it grew well. One half of the field in due time sent up a crop of wild oats, the other a few thistles and pigweeds. Wild mustard also made its appearance, and as to cut in time to prevent these from seeding would be too early for the alfalfa, these were pulled. Except a little in one corner which was cut for green feed and fed at the time, it was left until I feared that the thistles would be seeding and the wild oats getting dangerously ripe, when it was cut, yielding about one and a half tons to the acre. As a nurse crop, the wild oats did admirably, but the alfalfa was not quite so robust, and confirms my conviction that it is better without any.

YOUNG ALFALFA PLANTS DELICATE.

The Kansas State Agricultural College Experiment Station says as follows: "Alfalfa should be sown alone. It does not want a nurse crop. Sometimes a good start is secured when alfalfa is seeded with some other crop, but many times it fails utterly. Young alfalfa is a delicate plant, and it needs all the moisture, plant food and sunshine available, and, usually, when it has to share these with another crop, it dies." Since cutting this field, I have read a clipping from The National Farmer and Stock-grower, which says: "If you want a strong, vigorous stand of alfalfa, don't be in too big a hurry to clip it to get rid of weeds and don't cut the crop from a newly seeded field too soon." This corresponds