

most execrable within the scope of the imagination." Yet this system takes a crop of corn or tobacco the first year, wheat or oats the second, and rests or lies out in grass from harvest of the second year, and throughout the third year—having very nearly two years of rest from the taking off of the second crop to the time of breaking again for corn or tobacco. The four field system with a fallow for wheat, which he proposes, takes a crop of corn or tobacco, and two crops of small grain in four years, and gives in that time about the same amount of rest—a large portion of this time, viz: all after the second crop, is devoted to a growth of *rag weed*, which, however, perishes upon the land. But for this weed which seems to leave nothing but dry sticks to be returned to the land, this system with its extra crop of fallow wheat, would be theoretically much more objectionable as regards the preservation of the soil than the three shift system. Yet we confess the most successful farming within our personal knowledge, both as to immediate results and the preservation of the soil, is done under this system. Our own knowledge of it is in Maryland, and we know that it is practiced with equal success in portions of Virginia. But the life of this system is *red clover*; and we do not know that it is practiced successfully where this most valuable improver is not relied upon, and where it does not flourish, and we suspect that the success of either rotation will depend mainly upon the careful culture of this plant. The four field system of Col. Taylor which he proposed as a substitute for that of three fields, left the third and fourth year entirely to grass.—The fault of this is that the clover passing away during the third year, the fourth year is occupied with weeds of various sorts and blue grass, the former exhausting the land and the latter a serious enemy of wheat and clover. The land becomes what is termed *foul*, and clover refuses to grow upon it. Nothing is better settled in practice than the necessity of active, cleansing cultivation, for the successful cultivation of clover. The term "clover sick," being applicable rather to land full of crude vegetable matter not capable of being appropriated, than by the frequent recurrence of the very destructible clover plant.

The five field system which makes a clover fallow the fourth year and leaves the fifth year for rest, has the objection to it, that the fifth year must be given up to the natural growth of weeds; clover if sown, rarely succeeding upon fallow.

The point to be aimed at, is the largest amount of crop, with the least amount of injury to the

land. To effect the least injury, or the most good to the land, the interval between the exhausting crops should be as far as possible occupied with such plants as are ameliorating themselves, and do not induce subsequent evils. The growth of weeds with their decay upon the surface may be ameliorating, but they leave their seeds, which may be ruinous to future crops, and are nurseries of insects. A blue grass turf is ameliorating in some respects, binding the soil to preserve it from washing, and affording a good bottom for the coming crop of corn, but blue grass as well as weeds, is the enemy of the great ameliorator, clover. While clover is the *sine qua non*, it is of itself *everything*. It perfectly, entirely supplies all the needs of the most valuable plants at the very least cost. Nothing, therefore, which is inimical to it should be allowed in your system. Let the great aim be to grow clover. That will grow everything else. But not only has clover this value, but we believe that the system which grows the greatest amount of crops is the most favorable to its growth. That system, as we have said, which requires such quick succession of profitable crops as gives the clover when sown a well cleansed bed on which to grow. We have often seen this plant, even on worn out lands succeed much better after two successive crops of corn, than on the same lands after a single cleansing crop.

Acting upon these suggestions, we will say to our correspondent, that he may find the four field system he proposes, sowing wheat upon clover fallow and wheat or oats after corn, a suitable one. It is a system productive of crops. It is favorable to the growth of clover, because it affords no time for the accumulation of crude and indigestible vegetable matters in the soil. The clover itself and the *rag weed*, while they afford large returns of vegetable matter to the soil, are at the same time very destructible, readily decomposed, and available at once as food for the large crops grown.

For this system, and indeed for any system, a standing pasture, or extra-pasture ground is essential. In nothing do we see more mismanagement than on this point of grazing our arable lands.—Overstocking upon such lands, is the curse of any system. We profess to be cotton or tobacco planters, or corn and wheat growers, but we expect the same lands that we devote to these purposes to grow beef and mutton and wool and pork besides. We can't resist the temptation to "turn out" calves and lambs without number, until our stock accumulates on our hands, and we fail in both