Agriculture, &c.

SHOULD STUBBLE BE BURNED OR PLOUGHED UNDER!

This is a question which we often hear discussed with considerable earnestness, and so far as we have observed, the disputants are pretty equally divided. A superficial consideration of the subject would certainly lead one to believe that ploughing stubble under is greatly to be preferred to burning it. It seems natural to suppose that by the first plan we restore to the soil a much greater amount of material out of which to form other crops, than we can do by simply burning it. But do we restore to the soil the material in a form that can be assimilated by the next crop? Can we make this stubble instrumental in increasing the fertility of land, either by itself or by its action on other substances contained in the soil? These are questions which it is well carefully to consider.

That any considerable quantity of the stubble of ripe grain finds its way into the next crop that is raised on the field, no one will pretend to argue. Thoroughly ripened straw undergoes a very slow decomposition, unless it is exposed to the combined action of heat and moisture; and experience demonstrates that straw-particularly wheat straw-will often remain in the soil for a whole season with its form preserved entire, and its appearance scarcely changed except by the absorption of water. Finally, it is true that the fibre of the straw becomes disintegrated, and the carbon is left on the land instead of being consumed. But we must remember that, chemically, carbon is of no use to the soil, though mechanically it may be, as an absorber of moisture and

gases. It is from carbonic acid, and not from charcoal that plants derive their supply of carbon. This inert carbon, if we except about one per cent. of hitrogen, is all that is saved to the soil by ploughing the stubble under, and that would not be returned to it if the same were burned.

Now let us consider briefly the disadvantageous form in which the mineral salts are returned to the soil in the process of turning under. They are in the form of organized matter, and must wait until this organism is entirely destroyed before they can be resuscitated into living forms. The potash. posphorus, soda, lime and silica, separate or in combination, must remain encased in carbon, which is one of the most indestructible substances, until that is slowly wasted away by the action of oxygen. Years might elapse before the silica, which is so necessary to give strength to the stalk of the grain, would be made available. Now, in all our prairie soils there is a great deficiency of this substance, and consequently the grain grown here is much more liable to lodge than that grown farther north or east. It is plain then that we should manage our stubble so that this silica will not become fixed, but will be in a condition to be used over and over again as often as possible. The same thing is true of all the

other mineral substances contained in the

straw; they are not impoverished by use

nor enfeebled by constant employment. Now let us see how burning affects the stubble with a view of making it available as manure for a future crop. The popular idea is that substances are destroyed the action of flame, but such is not the case. Rot and fire accomplish exactly the same end in changing vegetable substances; but the one effects in a moment what it will require the other years to perform. Each decomposes, neither can destroy; we have before shown that the sooner this decomposition is effected in the stubble of the grain the better will be the results. Straw, from the fact that it contains so little nitrogen, and so large an amount of mineral substance, should be burned; but the same process would be very disadvantageous as regards stable manure, or other substances which are rich in nitrogen. These require to be slowly decomposed, and it is preferable that it be done beneath the surface of the ground, in order that all the ammonia which is formed by the disengaged nitrogen and hydrogen may be saved. Carbon here is necessary to absorb this gas, and that which is produced from the slow rotting of vegetable matter, is very suitable for this purpose. But the same need does not exist in the case of the lower part of grain straw, as it contains little else thau carbon and mineral substances.

Ploughing stubble under may produce some mechanical good on certain soils, that are very clayey or are apt to run together and form a coherent mass : but in the great majority of cases, stubble leaves the soil quite too porous, and there are few instances where it is not advisable to rollstubble before ploughing it, in order to close up, if possible, the cavity of the stalks. This loosening of the soils of clayey lands is perhaps the only argument, if we except the retention of the carbon, that can be advanced in favour of ploughing stubble under. To offset this we have the additional expense of rolling the land, and the great disadvantage of the stubble interfering with the movement of the plough and the turning ONE PILL IN A DOSE. of the furrow.

but even in the case of clay lands the argument is with the fire. Nothing renders clay so available for agricultural purposes as heat. It tends to pulverize it and at the table globe; same time to render the silica soluble, and in a condition to unite with potash aad soda. Every vine dresser knows, that there taken at one time. One of your pills cured me. are few better substances to apply to either a vineyard or a field than pulverized brick. The cheapest and by far the easiest mode of your pills cured me, and I have no return of the applying this manure is by burning over malady.' our clay fields.

favour of burning stubble, there are others which are equally forcible. Fire has always! been spoken of as a purifier, and in no place is it so efficient as in a stubble field. The house. seeds of the tares which have grown along chronic. with the wheat till the time of the harvest, fire that consumed the stubble, and the da same is true to an equally great extent of Farmer.

MERCENCED ALMANAOV

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IT For I 10H WATER at Annapolis, Digby, &c., and at St. John, N. B., add 3 hours to the time at

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