

PLOWHANDLE TALKS.

PROF. SHERWIN'S PLAN FOR STOPPING GULLIES.

Not For Ordinary Washes, But For the Big Unmanageable Ones.

A FEW weeks ago, we read in The Progressive Farmer the story of Prof. Sherwin's recently acquired gully and his theory of how he would fill it—that he would lay pipe at the lower end, build a dam over the pipe, just above the dam have an upright connecting pipe a little lower than the top of the dam with a wire screen over the top of the pipe, this pipe to take the overflow of water. Then he expects the erosion from other parts of the field to fill the gully. He did not say but it is presumed he would have several of these dams with pipe outlets if the gully was of much length or considerable descent.

A gully can be filled in this way, at the expense of other portions of the field, except that the sections immediately below the dams where the pipes must be left uncovered will still be open. This method will also take a long time, much longer than required to make the gully, unless great abrasion is permitted in other portions of the field. I wondered any practical farmer would lay aside the present simple method of filling gullies and adopt the pipe theory. Then the next week, as if to fix the theory, The Progressive Farmer carried cuts illustrating the pipe theory.

The simple practice is this, and I doubt if there is any improvement. Lay-off terraces to suit every portion of the field as if no gullies were there, crossing the gully wherever the terrace happens to intersect it. There may be one, or a half-dozen terraces across the same gully. At each terrace crossing build a good dam of sufficient strength and high enough to connect with the terrace bank on each side of the gully and form a part of the same. Then should there be an excess of water at any time the overflow will follow the terrace. As rows conducting water toward the gully approach it, open an occasional row into the gully. Then use the gully as a receptacle for all kinds of trash and debris about the field, or farm. Into it throw roots, stumps, stones, brush and any unsightly stuff you wish to get out of the way and make it also serve a purpose. Break off the edges of the gully and tumble it in upon the trash as soon as the gully can be crossed with plow do so. In a very short time the gully has undergone a transformation, and is the richest spot in the field.

I have a neighbor who, after giving the treatment above, uses a one-horse drag scoop, and taking a load of dirt here and there at convenient distances, fills the gully the first year, believing that it is cheaper than turning on the bank and waiting for several years for it to fill.

I quite agree with Prof. Sherwin, that it is a shameful thing to have these unsightly gullies on the farm. A farm is something more than a mere inanimate thing. It responds to kind treatment. It makes returns for nourishing food. It blooms and blossoms with rosy and dimpled cheeks, if the treatment, care and environment are wholesome. It brings forth bountiful crops under the kind gentle touch of a friend.

When I see a field all marked and scarred by gullies and other evidences of mis-treatment, I know at once it has been in bad company, just as some men carry in their faces scars and bruises and hard features from contact with sin. Yes, it is a shame to mistreat a farm.

T. IVEY.

Cary N. C.

Editorial Comment:—With ordinary gullies in a cultivated field

there can be no question that it is better to do the job of filling at once, and have it done with; but there are gullies and gullies. The method outlined by Professor Sherwin can be successfully used, we feel sure, on the great devastating washes in pastures and abandoned fields which the average farmer regards as entirely beyond his control. In short, this is a method to be used on the big unmanageable gullies which laugh at terrace banks and which in many cases have carried away acres of soil. The time to stop a gully is when it starts—or before—but if any reader has on his place a gully so big that he hesitates to tackle it, we believe it will pay him to give Professor Sherwin's plan a trial.—E. E. M.

"Fools Burn Leaves."

SOME years ago, I bought a place where there was a poor sandy garden. We raised four potatoes in a hill size of hickory nuts, other crops like that. We got one small one-horse load of fresh horse manure, then raked leaves from a large front yard, and put on the garden, set raspberries, grapes, pie plant, asparagus, etc. We threw all house slops on garden, summer and winter. Coarse kitchen slops were buried first one place than another, all over the garden. In winter they were spread all over the garden and forked in in the spring. We soon had as fine a garden as I ever saw any where, and much to sell.

The grass raked after the lawn mower also was used to mulch rose-bushes, raspberries and asparagus or grapes. With our grape vines well pruned after leaves fell in fall, laid down and covered with leaves, held in place by old sacks, boards, etc., and left protected until danger of spring frosts was past. So we never lost grapes by spring frosts, usually had more grapes, raspberries, rhubarb, asparagus, lettuce, celery, radishes, tomatoes, and truck generally than a large family could use, divided with my neighbors and had some to sell at times besides.

I agree with Mr. Powell, "Fools burn the leaves."

How often we see them raked into the street with old bones and set on fire, often damp, making a filthy smoke, a nuisance to the neighbors and passersby—and a great waste of humus and fertility, leaving only ashes to blow into homes about, or wash away to be lost.

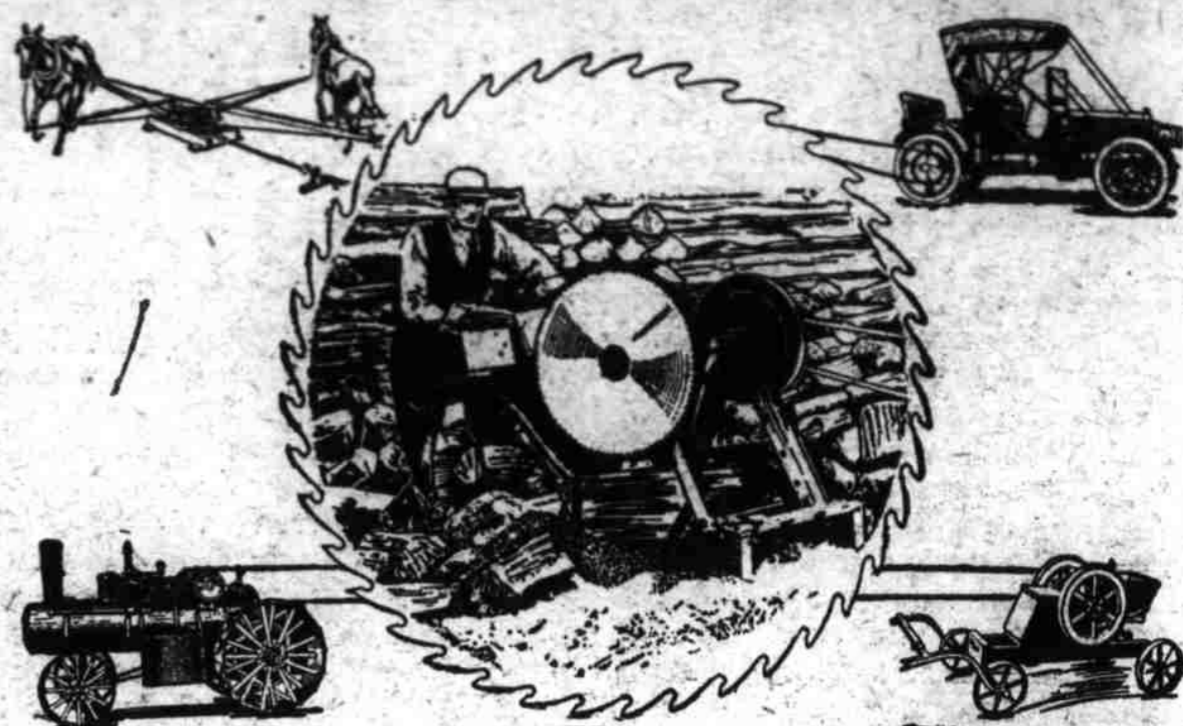
ALTON M. WORDEN.

Tullahoma, Tenn.

Don't Burn the Cornstalks.

A GOOD many persons say and believe, that there is no benefit derived from the cornstalk. Right here is where they make a big mistake. I know from experience that when cornstalks are plowed under during late fall and early winter, they add greatly to the fertility of the soil, and also have a tendency to lighten up stiff or heavy soils. In this way I find them to be very valuable; tho I find that they are much more valuable when used as feed for cattle, cut or shredded, and the manure made from them applied to the land. In this way stock consume a large portion of them. A goodly per cent of the feed value of the corn crop lies in the stalks and fodder, and ought not to be wasted by burning them, as a good many farmers do just to get them out of the way in late spring. The few light ashes from a pile of cornstalks benefit the land very little, as I have noticed this several years ago, when I did not know any better, following the same rule of burning.

Take my advice and never burn the cornstalks, if you desire to secure the most benefit from them, but utilize them in feeding stock, and



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WM. HART HARRISON.

Prince George, Va.

Has the Small Farmer Been Given a Square Deal?

WHILE I appreciate the fact that you are doing a good work for the farmers of the South, and deserve the support of all progressive farmers, still I think you make a mistake in dismissing the "one-horse farmer" with the comment that he can get another horse if he so desires. This may be true in a few instances, but I think it doubtful that it would prove true in many cases.

The trouble with a great many of the poor fellows is that they are in a rut and can't lift themselves out, while the men you would suppose would gladly assist them are afraid to advance aid to a class of people who have never shown a capacity for greater things. Business men are not much given to charity; they must necessarily take a business view of the one-horse farmer's means and opportunities.

Nearly all of the one-horse farmers have inherited their non-progressive ways—four furrows to the row, planting on the light and the dark of the moon, etc. Few of them take any paper, except some country weekly, that deals mostly in politics, and if it gives any agricultural information, it is given in a condensed form, or treats of something applicable to some other section of the

country, with which he is not familiar.

Farmers' Institutes, experiment stations, departments of agriculture, good farm papers, have all helped a class of farmers who are in a measure able to help themselves, while the man who stands most in need of assistance has failed to receive much benefit.

My idea is that you use your influence with the Department of Agriculture, State Experiment Stations, and all farm demonstrators to give the one-horse farmer this full attention for awhile, till they get him in a better situation, then help him the best way in the world—by leaving him to help himself. If these departments would have the demonstrators look up the small farmers, get them into clubs, and associations, to put their teams together for subsoiling and cultivating a few acres with improved machinery, work out plans for them to co-operate in buying machinery, supplies, etc., and in selling their products after they once cultivate a few acres under intelligent management with up-to-date tools, it is not probable that many of them would be willing to return to old methods.

H. L. GRIFFITH.

Ruffin, N. C.

I find the advice of The Progressive Farmer the most applicable of any farm journal I ever read; all others of a routine line, too complicated or expensive for a poor man to undertake or comprehend. Any man that can read can follow the teaching of The Progressive Farmer. You are doing a great and good work.—C. H. Walker, White Pine, Tenn.