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AND SOUTHERN FARM GAZETTE

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THE MAN WHO BURNS DOLLARS

WE ALL know him, the man who burns dollars. At this season the haze of blue smoke from burning stalks, grass and other rubbish overhangs his farm, advertising his destructiveness to the world.

He revels in the use of fire.

Corn stalks are cut and laboriously piled by hand and the torch applied; grass, straw, and weeds are raked into long windrows and burned.

In fact, he burns about everything in the fields except the cotton stalks, and the only reason these are not burned is because years of burning vegetable matter have so impoverished the soil that it is incapable of growing anything but "bumble-bee" cotton, the stalks of which are too tiny to rake or pick up. Let's see what he's losing—actually throwing away.

From analyses at hand, it appears that corn stalks and the accompanying fodder contain about one per cent of nitrogen, or twenty pounds per ton, worth at present prices about \$5. Weeds, grass and similar materials probably run equally high in nitrogen content. Thus the man who burns a ton of corn stalks, grass or weeds is deliberately destroying \$5 worth of plant food, since fire drives off into the air practically all the nitrogen contained. We believe the humus value of such materials is as high as their direct fertilizing value and if this be so, their burn-



A GOOD STAND OF WHITE CLOVER. SEE PASTURE ARTICLE ON PAGE 3

ing means a total loss of \$10 for each ton destroyed.

In other words, the man with a twenty-acre field of corn stalks, assuming 1000 pounds of stalks per acre, is losing a round \$100 when he burns these instead of plowing them under. At the same time he is probably buying fertilizers at high prices in the effort to keep his humus-hungry fields up to profitable yields.

It is not enough to say that stalks and grass are in the way of cultivation, for if they are cut to pieces and plowed under in time they will very soon be thoroughly rotted and incorporated with the soil; nor is it enough to say that we have no implements for cutting the stalks to pieces, for if we have no disk harrow or stalk cutter, it will pay many times over to chop up the stalks with a hoe, rather than sacrifice their plant food and humus value by burning.

This is a time for soil conservation and soil building, a time for saving and utilizing every possible pound of plant food. The man who fails to do these things, who burns plant foods instead of saving them, will sooner or later find himself up against poverty on a worn-out farm.

He will have burned dollars too long.

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