

TIME OF REAPING.—At a late meeting of the Ulster Chemistry Association, Dr. Hodges gave an abstract of the various experiments which had been made in England, and other countries, to determine the proper method of reaping the grain crops. He said that, though in many places in this country, early reaping was regarded as an innovation on the old rules of sound husbandry, yet, that the practice was not of modern origin, but strongly advocated by the agricultural writers of ancient Rome, one of them remarking that, with respect to wheat, "the later it is reaped the better it casts, but the sooner it is reaped the fairer the sample. The best rule is to cut it down before the grain is got hard, when the ear begins to have a reddish brown appearance. "Better two days too early than as many too late" is a good maxim, and might pass for an oracle. In modern times (Dr. H. remarked), the opinions of the old Roman had been revived, and their correctness proved, both by scientific investigation and the experience of observing farmers. Dr H. continued to give an account of the characters presented by the cereal plants at various periods of growth, and directed attention to the valuable experiments by Dr. Hannam, an experienced English farmer, and also to the analytical investigations lately published by Dr. Voelcker, Professor of Chemistry in the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester, which had been undertaken at the suggestion of Mr. J. Walker, of Glynn, a member of the Society. Dr. H. urged the propriety of reaping grain at a much earlier period than usually practised in this country, as, at the period of full ripeness, a similar amount of flour and a greater proportion of bran was obtained, and the amount of muscle-sustaining ingredients both in wheat and oats was less than in the grain cut at an earlier period. It has been proved by analysis, he said, that ripe oats afforded only about 15 per cent. of muscle-sustaining matters, while the same kind of oats, cut green, yielded about 18 per cent. It might, therefore, be inferred, so far as present knowledge extends, that the practical rule laid down by Mr. Hannam, of cutting wheat at least a fortnight before full ripeness, should be adopted; and, also, that oats should be cut when the ear has become so firm that no milky liquid can be expressed by pressure on the grain. The Chairman asked, if any experiments had been made to ascertain whether grain was good for seed when cut so green? Dr. Hodges said that no trustworthy experiments were recorded. He would prefer the fully ripe grain for sowing. He trusted that, next year, some of the members would be prepared to give the details of experiments showing the produce and value of the grain crops cut at various periods of growth. Mr. Andrews said that they had been cutting earlier in his neighbourhood year after year. The old popular notion was that "a green shear

was a bad shake." Dr. Orr exhibited samples of wheat and oats cut at different periods, some of which showed how much the ears continued to fill after being placed in the stooks. Dr. Orr proposed, and Mr. Andrews seconded the following resolution, which was adopted:—"That it is the opinion of the meeting that all kinds of cereal grains should be reaped while the pickle is still in a soft and doughy state, and at the time it has ceased on pressure to exude a milky liquid."

PEAT CHARCOAL.—An interesting meeting was recently held at the private house of Mr. Pinney, M. P., of persons interested in the Irish Amelioration Society, a chartered company formed for the purpose of manufacturing peat from the bogs of Ireland into charcoal, partly with a view to afford employment to the Irish peasantry, and partly with a view to profit. We have not much faith in semi-philanthropical enterprises, and we are therefore glad to see that this company's proceedings are likely to succeed on the sounder basis of commercial profit. Mr. Pinney, who is an active director of the society, and Mr. Jasper Rogers, the society's engineer, made statements, and referred to experiments which prove that peat may be converted into charcoal, by the company's patent process, at a cheap rate, that when so converted it furnishes a complete deodoriser for sanitary purposes, and that the charcoal, alone or mixed with nightsoil, is very useful for agricultural purposes. At the same time the company's operations afford much employment in Ireland to the most destitute portion of the peasantry. Nightsoil mixed with the charcoal is quite inodorous, and according to an analysis made by Mr. Nesbit of Kennington, the value of the compound manure is about one-half that of guano. We have at this moment in progress a practical trial of the agricultural value of the peat charcoal and nightsoil manure for turnips, as compared with guano, nightsoil and mould mixed, and manure from cattle fed in boxes. At present the box-fed manure—a heavy dressing—has produced the largest plant; on the peat charcoal manure, and the mould and nightsoil, the plants are as nearly equal as possible, but the expense and trouble of carting, mixing, and laying on the mould and nightsoil were very considerably more than the peat charcoal. The guano is five cwt. to the acre, equal in money value to the charcoal manure, and as yet the plants on the charcoal are better than those on the guano. The peat charcoal, applied alone to potatoes, is said to prevent disease; and as the selling price in Ireland is 35s. per ton, and a comparatively small quantity is stated to produce such important effects, attention ought to be drawn to the subject.—*Economist*.

Envy—punishing ourselves for being inferior to our neighbours.