

weather be unpropitious, it is best to cut as fast as it matures, as it is subject to injury under such circumstances if suffered to remain too long. The harvesting of the crop is an important period in its cultivation, and neglect on the part of the planter will bring loss in its future value. In cutting the plant, a sharp knife is to be used, and the stalk to be split about half its length, taking care not to break the leaves or otherwise injuring them, and the plant to be set with the butt of the stalk up, exposed to the sun. So soon as the plant is wilted enough to handle without breaking, they should be taken up and laid in a heap of seven to nine in a place, being governed by their size, and hung as soon as possible to prevent being scorched by the sun. The after part of the day is best for cutting; there is less danger of getting the plant sunburnt. The sticks upon which the plants are hung are small pieces of timber four feet long, and of sufficient size to support the plants. These are taken to the barn on a cart or wagon after receiving the plants, or may be placed upon scaffolds in the field, at the option of the planter. If the weather is fair, it is best to sun it, as it aids the curing, and adds to the strength and elasticity of the leaf after it is cured. Care should be taken not to place the sticks too close, if the weather be damp and warm, as there is danger of injuring the plant. After remaining on the scaffold a few days it becomes yellow or assumes the color of a leaf in autumn; it must then be carried to the barn or curing house, and placed away, keeping the sticks far enough apart to secure a free circulation of air through them. If the weather is wet, it is best to take the plants to the house at once, and let the yellowing process take place in the house rather than risk the changes in the weather, as rain is always injurious to the plant after it is cut, and especially so after it becomes yellow.

The curing process is one of the most important features in the future value of the crop, and too much care cannot be given it, a small neglect lessening the value of the crop seriously. If the weather is dry and the tobacco is not too much crowded in the house, the action of the atmosphere, assisted by a small portion of fire, will be sufficient to effect the object. If, however, the weather is warm and damp, the atmosphere will not aid very materially in curing the plant, and unless firing is resorted to, the plant is certain to be more or less injured. It is always safer after a house is filled with green tobacco to rely mostly upon the action of the fire to a considerable extent. These should be small and slow at first, and continued so until the tobacco is clear of the moisture engendered by the fire, is dried out, and then increased until the leaf is nearly cured. When this is the case, the fires should be suffered to go out, and the tobacco to be suffered to come in case, or get soft again. The quality of the article will be improved by permitting it to come in case once or twice before it is thoroughly cured in stem and

stalk. Dry and sound wood is best for firing. If the object of the planter is to make a piebald or fancy article, care should be taken never to permit the leaf to get very soft during the curing process; and to make a really fancy article, the tobacco must be thoroughly yellowed before, and cured entirely by fire. This particular description is, however, not more desirable or valuable to the consumer, as the essential properties of the plant are frequently destroyed by the action of the fire. As a general thing, it is better to cure the weed by a natural process of air and the action of the atmosphere, and where the planter is provided with a sufficient quantity of room to house the crop without crowding too close, the object can be attained without the aid of much fire, and the wood and danger of the crop saved, and in some markets increase the value of the crop.

Having now arrived at the time when it is supposed the planter has secured and cured the crop, we proceed to give some directions in its future management and preparation for market—remarking that many, after all their previous care and labor, lose its profits to a good extent by either a want of knowledge as to its management, or a carelessness which is inexcusable upon their part. After being for upwards of thirty years engaged in its culture, and to some extent a dealer in the article—after visiting the principal markets in the Union—I have long since come to the conclusion (and I have never seen any reason for a change of the opinion) that the prices paid for the different qualities of the article by the purchaser is more generally a matter of fancy than of superior judgment on his part of the quality of the article bought, and that fancy was generally governed by the care bestowed by the planter in preparing the article for market. If this opinion is correct, how very important for the planter to so prepare his crop for market as to realize its greatest value, and I proceed now to speak definitely upon that subject.

After the tobacco has been thoroughly cured in stem and stalk, it is then ready to commence stripping or taking the leaves from the stalk. In this process the plant first passes through the hands of the most experienced laborer on the farm, who takes off the bad or injured leaves and ties them neatly in bundles of eight or ten. The plants that are thus culled are given to others who strip off the remaining leaves, and tie them in bands of six or eight leaves, wrapping tightly and neatly with the tip of the leaf used as a tie, so as to form a head of one and a half to two inches in length. Care should be had to make the bundles as uniform in size and color as possible, as it adds to the beauty of sample by which it is to be sold. When the days work is done, let the tobacco, neatly pressed through the hands, be put in a winrow, as it is termed, viz: laid straight in a bulk or pile of sufficient length to hold the day or two day's work, and only the width of one bundle and one-half, and