

PUTTING IN THE CROP.

The ground having been faithfully prepared, the grower must hasten the operation of seeding with the utmost dispatch, as the earlier the seedling, as a rule, the heavier the lint of the plant. Mark off the land with a small plough and very shallow furrow, or it may be marked off by a drag made of a small log of wood; anything to make a line to guide the sower accurately; then proceed by hand to broadcast your seed evenly at the rate of fifty pounds of seed per acre as the *minimum* or even up to seventy pounds as the maximum quantity, varying with the strength of the land; the object being to produce as thick a growth of plants as the land will sustain. If the plants set too thin on rich soil the stalks grow too coarse, producing a coarse and inferior lint; on the contrary, if seeded too thick the growth proves so short as to materially affect the value of the crop. In the latitude of the hemp-growing section of Kentucky the seedling is mostly done from the 1st to the 15th of April, and the land generally plowed the fall before.

In Iowa the seeding should be done as soon as the ground proves to be in good dry working order; although the seed itself seems very tender and its vitality easily affected, and its germination after sowing often seriously disturbed by unfavourable circumstances, yet, when once above ground and fairly set, no ordinary frosts that destroy other vegetation, seem to affect it; hence, but little danger need be apprehended from late frosts, that prove so destructive to corn. The seed being sown, proceed to cover them up with a light harrow by running both ways to secure uniform results. The shallower the seed is covered in a moist soil, the more certain the vegetation.— If the season and soil be dry, a somewhat deeper covering may be necessary. Under favourable circumstances, the crop makes its appearance in a few days, and with proper sun and moisture it rapidly covers the ground. From seed time until harvest, the laborer has only to watch its almost magic growth from day to day. After having once covered the ground the crop is generally considered safe by the grower, yet he is sometimes doomed to disappointment. Hail storms prove very destructive to the very tender watery growth of the young hemp plant; high winds damage the yield, but never entirely destroy the crop from seed time until harvest.

RIPENING AND HARVESTING.

The maturity of the crop is indicated by a change of color in the leaf, it gradually fading from a deep green to a paler hue, also a shedding of the leaves, beginning at the bottom of the leaves and gradually extending up the stalk.

The male plants ripen fully ten days in ad-

vance of the female, and in some countries where labour is next to nothing, the male is first harvested by being drawn up by the roots, the female being left standing; in our country such a mode of harvesting is impracticable; hence the American grower must divide the time as near as may be, between the earlier and later ripening, and thus secure the best results possible under the circumstances. The male plant is covered with minute pods, bearing pollen, which at maturity burst and fill the whole atmosphere. It may be seen when the crop is stirred by a brisk breeze rising in immense clouds and floating away from the field. When this is seen in addition to the indications previously named, the crop is ready for the knife.

This instrument is of a peculiar shape, perfected by long experience and need not here be described, as they can be purchased in the hemp region of Kentucky of almost any smith. The ancient manner of harvesting was by pulling as with flax, but this has long since been abandoned in favour of the hemp-hook, as the knife is called. Of late years, J. B. McCormick of St. Louis, Mo., and Versailles, Ky., has patented hemp-cutting machinery as an attachment to the McCormick Reaper. The writer has used the attachment and considers it a perfect success; it will supersede the hook in all level lands, and must prove well adapted to Iowa use. In Kentucky some of her best hemp lands lie so rolling and so rough as to perhaps preclude its use. If the crop is to be cut with the hook, the operator is required to cut at one through a width corresponding to the length of the hemp and as close to the ground as possible, spreading his hemp in his rear in an even, smooth swath, where it remains exposed to the sun's rays until it is properly cured and the leaves sufficiently dried to detach easily. The last operation is sometimes omitted by careless growers, and some contend without injury. The hemp can be shocked or *stooked* (as the Yankee would say) with more compactness without the leaves than with them, and any operation having an influence upon the future security of the staple from dampness or atmospheric influence is certainly important; the perfect detachment of all the leaves should then in no wise be admitted. No time should be lost after the stalk is cured in getting the crop up and in neat shocks. Every additional day's exposure to sun, wind, rain or dew, is deteriorating its quality and subtracting from its quantity; the brighter the stalks can be secured the better. The same rules will apply to hemp that obtain in securing good hay.— The operator, in taking up the hemp, uses a rude stick cut from the branches of the nearest tree, about the length and weight of a heavy hickory walking cane, taking care to use a fork of the branch (←) as