

putting on an outside row the sheaves are turned, so that the butts lie uniformly, and all in the same direction. The long end of the butt is turned backward. In the succeeding row the long end of the butt (that which lay upwards in the stook) is turned forwards, and this alternation of the long ends backwards, and forwards is afterwards seen in the shaven and trimmed rick. A stack so built, after *shaving*, reflects the light in opposite directions, and looks very well. (1) This involves but little trouble to a skilled man, for instead of turning the sheaves he turns himself, and alternately builds around his stack, first hopping around to the right and the next course to the left, hence the expression right and left stacking. The course are kept as regular as courses of bricks, and great pains are taken to build firmly, as explained in last week's "Seasonable Notes."

THATCHING.

Immediately a rick is completed it ought to be thatched without an hour's delay. When the stack-maker descends the thatcher should climb the ladder and take his place. Thatching may be done with straw ready drawn, or with straw drawn by the thatcher as his work proceeds. The former is the general practice in the south, and the latter in the north. The details are not easy to describe, but the extremely neat work turned out by north country men is sufficient proof that undrawn straw may be laid on with quite as good effect as yelms or steeps.

ROPING.

When drawn straw is used roping and thatching proceed



GALLOWAY CATTLE, THE PROPERTY OF SIR ROBERT JARDINE.

LAYING THE EASING OR EAVES.

The body of the rick is called the leg, and a good leg is an important matter even to a rick. It swells in size to the top, and grows out by its own weight into a form which throws off the wet all round. When the leg has been carried up to the proper height the builder then prepares to lay the easing. This he does by first filling the middle well, and the easing course is made by turning the long ends of the butts upwards instead of sideways. These long ends project beyond the outline of the rick, and still further protect it from rain. The roof is thus commenced and is continued by gradually drawing in the sheaves until a regular cone is produced. The extreme top is made by building the sheaves in a solid cone with the crop ends upwards, forming a solid cone ending in a blunt point. This is careful rick building, but is seldom seen nowadays. We have, however, known many old rick-makers who observed all these rules, and many others which it would be tedious to put on paper.

simultaneously the tar band being secured with long or short stack stakes. When undrawn straw is used the thatch is first laid on, each handful being pushed into the butts of sheaves and feathered over each other so as to draw off wet. The roping is done with straw ropes, the making of which gives employment during many a wet day long before harvest. When straw ropes are used the first thing is to put on an easing rope just below the eaves, and this is done with care, straining it up tight with the aid of long forks and beaters. Each rope is then knotted to the easing rope and used over the apex of the rick, and tied tightly to the easing rope on the opposite side of the rick. Supposing such a rope to be fixed, a second is tied to the eaves' rope about one foot of the first, and this also passes over the apex, and is tied on the opposite side. Three men are required, one man on each side mounted on a ladder and one man on the top of the rick passing the ropes properly over the apex until they form a solid cone and sharp point. The thatch is prettily worked with the ropes at the eaves like the straw in a bee skep, and when all the ropes are on a neat ornament of cut straw sets off the now completed rick.

(1) In the S. of England, every stack of grain is shaven, or shorn, after setting, with an old scythe blade set upright on a pole. The grain is then safe from birds and rain. A. R. J. F.