

to expose the lower part of the stalk, and sever with the knife near the surface of the ground, letting the stalk drop over without doubling the leaves under. Lay the plants on the ground to wilt for an hour or two, or until the leaves lose their brittleness and can be handled without breaking. Then load the tobacco on a wagon, keeping the butts out on both sides in loading, and draw to the drying-house. No more plants should be cut than can be taken in and hung up the same day. Never cut tobacco on a rainy day, as the leaves are then sure to get sandy, which will lessen their value, and do not allow the plants to lie long on the wagon or in a pile, as they soon sweat and heat, which quickly injures them.

DRYING.

A house 30 by 24 feet so arranged as to hang the tobacco in four tiers is said to be large enough to give drying accommodation to an acre of tobacco. Most growers prefer to build their drying-houses tight, so that they may be closed up in unfavourable weather. Such buildings are supplied at the base with a number of doors, affording openings large enough to admit air freely, and ventilators are provided above. Drying-houses are most commonly built from 16 to 20 feet wide, 16 feet high and 40 to 50 feet long, or longer if required. Occasionally buildings are met with which have their sides covered with boards so placed as to leave an inch or more of space between each to provide for free access of air. This, however, does not afford sufficient protection in case of unfavourable weather. Whatever method may be used for hanging the stalks, they are placed on the sticks about 5 inches apart, leaving eight or nine stalks on a stick, and the sticks are so arranged as to leave a space of 8 or 9 inches between them.

When the plants are sufficiently dried, which is known by the stems becoming of a brown colour and breaking when bent, the tobacco is ready for stripping. Damp weather is chosen for this operation, when the damp air is freely admitted and the leaves absorb moisture so that they can be handled without breaking. The operator pulls the leaves from the stalks one by one, until he gets what is technically called a "hand," which consists of from twelve to sixteen leaves, when these are fastened together by a good leaf folded to two or three inches in width, and wound around the base and secured by tucking the end under. During the stripping the leaves are separated into two grades according to size and soundness—all the torn and injured leaves, as well as the small and less matured specimens, forming the second grade.

BULKING.

After the tobacco is stripped it is packed down each day where it will be secure from drying winds or wet. The "hands" are placed with butts out and the leaves overlapping at the tips for about one-third of their length, laying one row of butts one way, then another on the opposite, keeping them straight and