

## Hay-Making.

In the making or curing of hay, the first things to be considered are the proper periods for cutting the grass, and the length of time and modes adopted to cause it to dry. On these points, practical men do not agree; some preferring to cut when in full flower, by means of which, they say, they obtain more and better hay, and the crop is less exhausting to the land; while others consider it best to permit the grass to stand until the seed has just ripened sufficiently to vegetate, which will be more or less scattered for the benefit of the succeeding crop, and the hay, it is thought, is more nutritious, and consequently will afford more flesh and strength.

Lucerne and clover, undoubtedly, afford better and more hay when cut in the flower, and is better adapted for dairy stock than when cut late; but to avoid loss in weight and quality, by heat or fermentation, it is better to salt them down in the mow or stack the same day they are cut, after being exposed a few hours to a hot sun. Two bushels of salt, if uniformly scattered among the hay, are sufficient to cure three tons.

Red-top, Timothy, and the more substantial grasses, generally are not cut before they have arrived at their full growth, all about the time they begin to ripen their seeds. If cut when in a growing state, the unripe juices of the plant are apt to bring on violent heat and fermentation; and thus deprive the crop of much of its substance and nourishment. The truth of this has been confirmed by the observation of Mr. Isaac Reeves, of Delaware, who is of opinion that, by mowing these grasses before they are ripe, the roots bleed and die out, and that this is the reason why a second crop does not spring up for a long time after. "I once," said he, "purchased the fifth part of a crop of Timothy on one of the Islands in the Delaware, with the intention of cutting my lot at the time the other four purchasers did theirs, but I was called from home, and it was not done until the seeds would vegetate. I thought my hay was spoiled; but it was preferred to that of all others for horse-feed; and behold, the next year, my lot of land yielded double the crop of the others, and at the end of three years, it had increased to two and a half tons to the acre, overgrowing all the other grasses, having a uniform crop of five feet in height, and preferred before all others at the market. Since that, I have never cut Timothy before the seeds will vegetate; and

I would take a poor field, that shows only a few spires of Timothy growing in it, and by these simple means, engage, in five years, to cut two and a half tons per acre, of superior hay, provided the land be suitable to the growth of the crop."

With regard to the best mode of making hay, there also prevail various opinions. One class of farmers never move their hay out of the swath on the day it is cut, but on the second day, shake all that was cut on the day previous, by giving it two turnings. It shaken the day it is cut, they say the hay is reduced by the heat of the sun; but by leaving it in the swath, it "soaks its own sap," and will be reduced very little afterwards. The more of the natural juice or moisture that can safely be left in the hay, the less they say, will it suffer from that portion of the loss which arises from the drying. Another class contend that *the more quickly the drying is effected, the less extensive will be the change in the starch of the plants;* and consequently the hay will retain more of its substance in a soluble or digestible state. The last assertion would seem to be correct, from observations made in England some time since on the two modes of drying hay. In the dales of Yorkshire, where great attention is given to the frequent turning of the hay, and the consequent increased rapidity of drying it, the cattle can be fattened upon hay alone, which is said to be rarely the case in Scotland, on the Tweed, where the process is more slow, occupying three or four days.

The plan generally adopted in the United States, and the one which long experience seems to justify, is to mow during the early part of a fair day, while the dew is on the grass, say until nine, ten, or eleven o'clock; then spread and turn the hay; towards evening rake it up into cocks of about 100 pounds each; and if the weather be very dry and hot, draw it to the barn or stack the same day. But if the crop is very heavy and green, it is suffered to remain in the cock over night, and about eleven o'clock the next forenoon, it is opened or spread, and four or five hours after is conveyed to the stacks.

In our agricultural labors, perhaps there is no branch more frequently slighted, and more slovenly done, than that of stacking hay and grain. The stacks are usually placed flat on the ground, often in situations where the water will not drain off, with the whole structure, rough, mis-shapen, and totally unprotected from vermin, and the rain. In