

TOPPING AND HARVESTING CORN.

There is much difference of opinion and practice among farmers in the management of their corn crops. Some always practice cutting the stalks soon after the kernels have become glazed or checked, believing that such a course hastens the ripening of the corn; and the removal of the stalks greatly facilitates the process of harvesting, and that green cut, well cured cornstalks are much more valuable as winter forage for cattle, than the same would be if left uncut till the corn was fully ripened, as is the practice of some. We presume this is a correct idea. But experiments made some years since, by the Hon. W. Clark of Massachusetts, seem to prove that the number of bushels of corn per acre was very much lessened where the stalks were cut, compared with portions of the field where the corn was not topped, but all left till the corn was fully ripened. By his experiment, the loss in grain must have been much greater than the increased value of the green cut stalks over the perfectly ripened fodder. But a difference of ten or twelve days time in cutting the stalks might make a material difference in the value of the grain. We think it is the safest way for those farmers that practice "topping" their corn, to cut their stalks quite late, rather than a few days too soon.

Well cured corn fodder is a valuable winter feed for farm stock, and much care should be exercised in saving it in the best possible condition. Many farmers are quite too negligent in this matter. We have seen the stalks cut quite green, and many days too soon, bound in large bundles and put up in large shocks, where it remained during all weathers for weeks, or till the corn was harvested; heavy winds blew over many of the shocks, and drenching rains thoroughly wetted them, thus nearly ruining them as fodder. We have seen others cart them directly from the field as soon as bound in bundles, where from want of room and care a large portion of them became mouldy, and nearly rotten and worthless. We know some careful farmers that pursue quite a different course. They do not top their corn until most of the tops of the spindles are dead, and many of the husks have lost their green color. They cut their stalks in fair weather, bind them in small bundles, cart them to the barns, and place the bundles *astride* of poles extending from beam to beam across the barn floor. Here they dry without heating or growing mouldy. If they have not room enough over the barn floor, they make use of hovels or sheds, in curing them. Those that practice this method think they are fully compensated for all extra labor, in the enhanced value of the fodder.

Many farmers prefer letting the crop stand till the grains are principally glazed, and then cutting all near the surface of the ground, and shocking in the field, letting it remain there till dry enough for husking. Some contend the corn ripens as well as if left upon the separate hills. The fodder, as a whole, is thought to be worth much more cured by this method, than by any other process. The crop, when thus cut up and shocked, is placed beyond injury from frost—a matter of much consequence some years. There is but little if anything gained by cutting and shocking corn after it has been stricken by frost. In cutting up the corn as soon as fairly glazed, the fields can be cleared in season for sowing winter wheat or rye—sometimes a matter of much consequence.

Some contend that the soundest and heaviest corn can only be grown by letting "nature take its course," that is, let the whole plant remain uncut till the corn is "dead ripe." This course, probably, may insure the greatest weight of corn per acre, if the autumn is favourable to its perfect maturing. We have more than once pursued this course, but found the labour of harvesting much greater, and thought the fodder less valuable.

Seasons vary so much, and the circumstances of farmers differ so greatly, (to say nothing of their prejudices,) that it would be idle for any one to attempt to point out the one best way—or rather, to say there was but *one* best way under all circumstances.

From present appearances, and the best information within our reach, we think it may be pretty safely predicted, that over a wide range of our country, this is not destined to be a great corn year. A large part of the growing corn is too late to fully mature, unless we have an unusually warm September and October, a circumstance hardly to be expected. Therefore it will probably be the safer course for most farmers to cut up and shock their corn as soon as it will in any way answer,—that is, if it can be done before receiv-