

to retain the elasticity of the tobacco, but no weight should be put upon them, as fermentation might result. If the leaves possess the right proportion of humidity when put in bulks, the bulking improves their colour, which becomes more uniform, and light streaks disappear.

TYING.

The tying, or putting into 'hands,' of tobacco, consists in putting together a certain number of leaves, from 15 to 20, and binding the 'hand' with another leaf, wound around the biggest end of the rib, the tip of the binding leaf being tucked conveniently into the 'hand.' Before tying the leaves into 'hands,' the grower should carefully grade the leaves, so as to pack only a uniform quality of products into bales or boxes. In grading, the points to be considered are: the length of the leaves, their thickness, their elasticity, and their colour. Torn leaves should never be graded with leaves in good condition.

Grading is a rather delicate task; that is, it requires a nice sense of discrimination and therefore some training. However, the necessary skill and judgment may be rapidly acquired. The value of the crop is always increased by careful grading.

After being gathered into 'hands' the leaves are again piled into bulks. Two rows of 'hands,'—with the tips inside and slightly overlapping—are piled up to a height of three feet, or more. These 'hand' bulks are covered with cloths to prevent their 'rying, and slightly weighted down. The tobacco in these 'hand' bulks should be examined more frequently than in the leaf bulks, as the 'hands' pack down much more easily and are therefore much more liable to ferment.

However, tobacco may be kept in bulks for a fairly long time, provided the temperature is not too high. Care must be taken, of course, to protect the tobacco from frost, and the bulking should be done in a building where such a thing as frost is not to be feared.

The tobacco is packed just before marketing. In packing, the hands should be arranged slightly overlapping, with the tips always in the centre. The bales are submitted to a light pressure, until they have acquired sufficient compactness to withstand the handling they will necessarily receive during transportation. The bales are wrapped with cloths, or thick paper, and secured with straps or bands which are wide enough not to cut into the leaves.

FERMENTATION.

Tobacco which is not to be marketed at an early date should be fermented.

As soon as the leaves are put into 'hands,' the latter are piled into bulks 5 or 6 feet high. A thermometer is placed in the centre of the heap or 'bulk,' in order to secure a record of its temperature. The temperature rises more or less rapidly, according to the proportion of moisture in the leaves, the size and height of the bulks, and the temperature of the room in which the tobacco is bulked; but it should never be allowed to go above 120° to 125° Fahr. When the thermometer gives this reading, the bulk should be broken up and rebuilt, care being taken to place in the centre of this new heap the 'hands' which were at the bottom and at the top of the first bulk. This exchange of position of the 'hands' will ensure a uniform fermentation of the total heap.

The first bulk should be broken up not only when the temperature threatens to rise above the maximum at which an injury may occur, viz., 125° Fahr.; but also when the fermentation decreases and when the heap shows a tendency to cool off.

The temperature will rise again in the second bulk, but not so rapidly, and not so high as during the first fermentation. This second bulk is allowed to cool off until the temperature of the tobacco is the same as that of the room. Packing may then be started.