



The Field.

Hints about Hay-making.

The season for making hay is close at hand, and a few hints on various topics connected with this part of farm work may not be unacceptable to our readers.

TIME OF CUTTING.

Many good reasons may be urged in favour of cutting grass early. By so doing, hay of more nutritious quality is obtained. Ripe hay, as it is called, is far less feeding in its nature than that cut sooner. Why is it that hay will not fatten stock as grass will? Because of the loss of the nutritious elements of the plant. But if the grass is cut and cured at the stage during which it contains fattening properties in the highest degree, these may to a very large extent be retained.

“Early in its growth, grass is watery; as it approaches blossoming, the amount of sweet nourishing juice increases; after blossoming, and as the seed ripens, the sugar diminishes, and the hard woody fibre increases. The best time, therefore, generally, is to cut within a few days after the principal portion of the crop has appeared in flower. For milch cows it should be cut a little earlier than for working oxen and horses. Hard stemmed grasses, as orchard grass and timothy, should be cut earlier than softer sorts.”

All who have had experience with well-cured, early-cut hay, testify to its superior value. The cows give more milk when fed on it, the young stock grow more rapidly, and the fat cattle require fewer turnips, and a smaller allowance of oil-cake. We are persuaded that many farmers commit a grand mistake in deferring their hay-making too long. Not only better hay, but more of it, may be obtained by early cutting. By not allowing the grass plants to mature their seed, the sward retains a larger share of its vitality. Maturing seed is an exhausting process, and when this is avoided, the sward, if the weather be favourable, and the land in good condition, will soon send up a fresh growth, from which a second cutting may be had late in the season. Especially is it needful for those to begin mowing early who have to depend on the now old-fashioned scythe. Failing to commence until the grass is mature, they are unable to get through until some of the crop is dead ripe, and then the hay is little better than straw.

EXPENSE OF MAKING HAY.

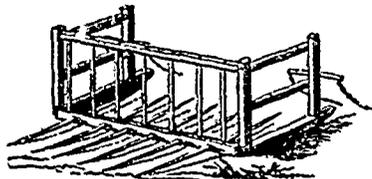
On this subject we find the following remarks in the *Country Gentleman*:—

“When meadows were cut by scythes, and raked by hand-rakes, the cost of securing a crop was computed to be one-half its value. Now, by the use of mowing machines, horse-rakes, horse-forks, &c., it need not be one-fourth, as the following estimate for cutting fifty acres will show:—

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| Interest on \$100, cost of Mowing Machine. | \$7.00 |
| Wear and tear, annually, say..... | 3.00 |
| Team and man, 8 days, 6 acres per day (a | |

| | |
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| low estimate),..... | \$10.00 |
| Cost of cutting 50 acres..... | \$20.00 |
| Raking, horse and man, 20 acres a day..... | 5.00 |
| Drawing, if 2 tons per acre, 2 men and 1 team; with horse-fork, 8 tons daily, \$3 per day, 12 days.. | 36.00 |
| Contingencies, rain, &c., say..... | 7.00 |

Cost of securing 100 tons.. \$78.00
Or, 78 cents per ton. It will be observed, however, that the team of the farmer stands idle much of the time in harvest, and that the actual cost, as compared with the old way, would therefore be really less.”



THE HAY SWEEP.

This is a labour-saving implement which any farmer may construct for himself, and although but little known, it is capable, under favourable circumstances of greatly lightening the toil of hay making. Where the hay is stacked in the fields, or put in a barn close to the meadow, the hay-sweep may be used to great advantage. It is estimated that used in connexion with the horse-fork, two or three men and a couple of boys, with the help of three horses, can draw and stow away thirty tons per day with ease. The accompanying cuts exhibit the construction and operation of this implement. The upper cut shows the sweep ready for use, the lower cut shows it in active business.



We extract the following description of this implement from *Tucker's Annual Register*:—

“It is essentially a large, stout, coarse rake, with teeth projecting both ways, like those of a common revolver; a horse is attached to each end, and a boy rides each horse. A horse passes along each side of the winrow, and they thus drag this rake after them scooping up the hay as they go. When 500 pounds or so are collected, they draw it at once to the stack or barn, and the horses turning about at each end,

causing the gates to make half a circle, draw the teeth backwards from the heap of hay, and go empty for another load—the teeth on opposite sides being thus used alternately. To pitch easily, the back of each load must be left so as to be pitched first.

“The dimensions should be about as follows:—Main scantling below, 4 by 5 inches, 10 feet long; the one above it, same length, 3 by 4 inches; these are three feet apart, connected by 7 upright bars, 1 by 2 inches, and 3 feet long. The teeth are flat 1½ by 4 inches, 5 feet long, or projecting 2½ feet each way—they are made tapering to the ends, so as to run easily under the winrow. A gate, swinging half way round on very stout hinges, is attached to each end of this rake, and to these gates the horses are attached. They consist each of two pieces of scantling, 3 inches square and 3 feet long, united by two bars of wood 1 by 2 inches, and a third at the bottom 3 inches square, and tapering upwards like a sled-runner—these runners project a few inches beyond the gate. The whiffletrees, are fastened a little above the middle of the gate, and should be raised or lowered so as to be exactly adjusted. It may be made for \$5.

“In using this machine, not a moment is lost in loading or unloading. No person is needed in attendance, except the two small boys that ride the horses. If the horses walk three miles an hour, and travel a quarter of a mile for each load, they will draw 12 loads, or three tons an hour, or 30 tons in 10 hours, leaving the men wholly occupied in raising the hay from the ground when deposited, by means of another horse with the pitchfork.

“It will be obvious that this rapid mode of securing hay will enable the farmer to elude showers and storms, which might otherwise prove a great damage.”

HAY CAPS.

These are laughed at by many as part and parcel of an effeminate parlour style of farming, but subjected to the test of experience, they commend themselves as well worthy of adoption by all judicious enterprising tillers of the soil. Some are incredulous about them and think they will get wet through like the cotton shirt on a labourer's back. On the contrary, they will shed rain like a cotton umbrella, or like the covering of a tent. It is said by those who have tried this expedient, that coarse clover will remain safe through a week's rain with such protection. And while preventing rain from coming in, cotton caps will permit the steam from the hay to go out. Mr. Emerson, an experienced New Hampshire farmer, says he has used hay caps for upwards of fifteen years, and recommends them to all his friends and neighbours. In reference to the time consumed by putting them on—an objection urged by many—he says they save time, inasmuch as they render less particularly needful in trimming and shaping the cocks. And while he has often had uncapped cocks of hay tipped over, or the tops blown off by gusts of wind, he never had such accidents occur when they were properly capped. Another