

referred to, there will of course be much less space between the various tiers of twine than between the tiers of laths.

Laths should be placed side by side, six inches apart. The lengths of twine should be at such a distance from one another as to leave a space of half the width of the hand when the wilting is completed, thus allowing for ample ventilation.

• The bottom tiers should be placed high enough above the floor to leave a space of at least one and a half or two feet between the latter and the tips of the tobacco.

The curing should start very slowly, in order to obtain a good yellow colour ; after which more air may be admitted. To hasten the colouring, the curing house may be kept closed a day or two at the start ; that is to say, the side trap doors should be closed, but the ventilators at the top should remain open, so as not to suppress ventilation altogether. The ventilation may be increased as soon as the edges of the leaves have turned brown, and when the mid-rib of the leaf has become supple. On warm and damp days, the curing house may be completely opened. On a very windy day, care should be taken to close the openings facing the wind, in order to avoid breaking the leaves or too rapid drying.

In continued damp weather, it will be necessary to dry artificially the air of the house, to avoid mould. Little fires of smokeless materials such as dry, scentless wood, charcoal, &c., should be started at various places on the floor of the curing house, in order to dry the air evenly in all parts of it, without causing too high an elevation of temperature. Continued dampness might cause the products to turn dull and gray, instead of taking on a bright colour. Artificial drying will remove this danger. This operation makes tight curing houses indispensable.

The best results will be secured when the leaves remain slightly supple all through the curing period, until the time of taking them down. Tobacco dried under such conditions is generally more elastic, and the leaves are less mottled.

STRIPPING—BULKING.

A careful examination of the mid-rib of the leaves will show whether or not the drying is complete.

The tobacco may be taken down from the laths when the colour of the leaf tissue is normal, and when the ribs are wrinkled in their whole length. On being opened up, the ribs seem to consist of a mass of independent fibres ; and only the ligneous, or woody, tissue should remain. No water should come out of the rib when the latter is squeezed near its inferior extremity. Sometimes a viscous substance will come out when this means of verification is adopted, but such substance should not be mistaken for water. The tobacco should also be supple, but not damp, with enough elasticity to regain its former shape after being squeezed with the hand.

For taking down the tobacco from the laths, a day should be chosen when the weather is neither too dry nor too damp.

In very dry weather, the tobacco will become rigid and would be in a poor condition for the handling which is to follow. In very damp weather, the tobacco might absorb too large a quantity of water, which would interfere with its keeping qualities. Weather generally known as 'mild' will be the most suitable.

As soon as the curing is completed, the tobacco should be removed from the curing house. A longer stay would injure its quality. The leaves are affected by changes in the moisture contents of the air ; they turn dull, lose their firmness, and even get mouldy in contact with the stalks.

The leaves are stripped from the stems, and piled into small heaps or 'bulks,' in which they remain supple until the time of grading and tying into hands.

The 'bulks' should be only moderately high. The leaves are placed in two rows, tip to tip inside. They should be frequently examined, in order to make sure that no rise in temperature takes place. When such a change is observed, the bulks should be broken up and rebuilt upon another spot. Cloths are laid over the bulks, in order