

the middle and bottom leaves, the ripeness of the plant as a whole must be taken into consideration when harvesting. To allow tobacco to become over-ripe before harvesting makes the leaves more brittle both at the time of harvesting and after being cured, tends to reduce the yield, and often results in an increased percentage of red leaf after curing.

*Methods of harvest.*—Of the various methods followed in harvesting tobacco the split stalk method has proven to be the best; both from the standpoint of economy of labour and the final colour of the cured leaf. In following this method the procedure is as follows: Several days before harvesting the tobacco laths are distributed along every fourth row in the fields; then when the tobacco is ripe it is harvested by splitting the stalk from the top of the plant to within about two inches of the ground; the plant is then cut off close to the ground and allowed to lie where it falls until sufficiently wilted to handle without breaking. After it has wilted sufficiently each harvester walks between two rows placing the plants on the lath by merely slipping the lath in between the split halves of the plant. The tobacco is then ready to be put in the curing barn.

By splitting the stalk the surface offered for the evaporation of moisture is greatly increased; and since the colour of the cured leaf depends upon the rapidity with which the moisture can be expelled, at certain times in the curing process, it is easily seen that this is an important factor in securing a satisfactory cure and in shortening the curing process. When the stalks are split there is also less danger of swelled stems.

After the tobacco has been placed on the lath it should be immediately hauled to the barn. If exposed to the sun and air too long the vitality of the leaf cells is greatly diminished and, as yellowing takes place while the tobacco is living, the tobacco will not yellow so well. On hot, sunny days there is also danger of the leaves being scalded by the heat, after which the scalded portions will always remain a dark-green, ugly colour.

*Hanging in the barn.*—The sticks of tobacco should be hung about eight inches apart on the tier poles, or far enough apart to prevent the tobacco touching that on the next stick. It is usually a good plan to regulate the distances between plants on the same stick after hanging, as there is a tendency for the plants to run together on the stick and they will not cure satisfactorily if crowded too much.

## THE CURING BARN.

A properly constructed curing barn is a very important consideration in curing the tobacco. Since at certain times, in curing the tobacco, a close barn is desired and at all times a uniform temperature is necessary, the barn should be tightly built; moreover, it should be well provided with vents both at the bottom, near the ground, and at the top to permit of the escape of the enormous amount of moisture given off at certain times in the curing process. A barn 20 feet wide, on the gable end side, by 18 feet 11 inches long, inside measurements, and 21 feet to the eaves is a very satisfactory size. This gives five rooms or sets of tier poles to hang tobacco on. The tier poles should run lengthwise of the barn or parallel to the widest side and should be 3 feet 8 inches apart horizontally, from centre to centre, 3 feet 3 inches apart vertically, and the bottom or lowest tier pole should be at least 8 feet above the floor. Such a barn should have two furnaces for heating it, from each of which a line of 12-inch galvanized pipe should extend along each side of the barn to within about a foot of the side opposite the furnace and then return through the centre of the barn. For firing with wood, these furnaces should be about 2 feet high by 2 feet wide, inside measurement, and about 7 feet long. The furnaces should not extend too far into the barn or too much heating surface will be lost. Usually about 4 feet is far enough for