

Toppling and Harvesting Corn

The following seasonable article, which we find in the Country Gentleman, contains some excellent suggestions, which may be valuable just now, if properly considered and applied: 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 corn was fully ripened, as is the practice of some. We presume this is a correct idea. But experiments made some years since by H. W. Clark, of Massachusetts, seem to prove that the number of bushels of corn per acre were 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 this experiment the loss in grain must have been much greater than the increased value of the green-cut stalks over the perfectly ripened corn. 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 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 cornstalks are 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 sheds, where they remained during all weathers, for weeks, or till the corn was harvested; heavy dews blew over many of the stalks, and "drenching rains thoroughly wetted" them, thus nearly ruining them as forage. We have seen others cut them directly from the field in large 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 a different course. They do not top their corn until most of the tops of the stalks are dead and many of the husks have lost their green color. They cut their stalks in fair weather bind them in small bundles, cut them in the barns, and place the bundles in sheds, where they are kept from being soiled or damaged by rain. 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 practise 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 the surface of the ground and shocking in the field, letting it remain there till dry enough for husking. Some contend that the corn ripens 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 some consequence some years. There is but little loss in the surface cutting and shocking of corn after it has been struck 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 the soundest and heaviest corn can only be grown by letting "nature take its own course"; that is, let the plants stand until the corn is "dead ripe." This course probably may insure the greatest weight of corn now here, if the autumn is favorable to its perfect ripening. We have more than once pursued this course, but found the labor 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 way, or, rather, to say there was but one best way under all circumstances.

Some planting.—When I lived up in Maine, and Uncle Ezra, I helped to break up a new piece of ground, we got the wood off in the winter, and early in the spring we began ploughing on it. It was so consarned rocky that we had to get forty yoke of oxen to one plough, we did faith, and I held that plough more'n a week—I thought I should die. It enarnest kilted me, I vow. Why one day I was holdin' and the plough hit a stump which measured just nine feet and a half long. At last, though I was going straight through the stump, when I happened to think it mightn't together again, so I threw my feet out, and had no sooner done so than it snapped together, taking a smart hold on the seat of my pantaloons. Of course I was tight, but I held on to the plough handle, and though the teamers did all they could, that team of forty oxen came no to let go my pantaloons, nor came no to let go my life. At last, though, after letting the cattle breathe they gave another strong pull altogether, and the old stump came out about the quickest. It had monstrous long roots, too let me tell you. My wife made the cloth for them pantaloons, and I haint worn any other kind since. The only reply made to this was: "I should say so, thought it would have come hard upon your suspenders." "Powerful hard!"

Witness you have said that while walking with an umbrella over your head, you fell into the reservoir and were badly injured. Did you break any bones, at that time? "I did not." "What bones?" "Whalbones sic."

Ahead of the market.—A lot of molasses, 95 barrels, from Chinese sugar cane, was received in New Orleans, on Saturday last, being considerably ahead of the usual time for receiving the first consignment of that article. The Glona (Ill.) Courier, says a Potatoe crop now selling in this city for twenty cents per bushel.

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