ARTIFICIAL HEAT IN CASING TOBACCO.

By S. B. Heddles of Janesville, Wis.

In treating with the subject of fermentation I only try to give you a brief outline of the process from my own actual experience, and will not attempt to treat the subject from a scientific standpoint.

One of the greatest problems confronting the leaf tobacco dealers in Wisconsin today is how to care for their packings in the curing process, and how to avoid the danger which occurs to more or less extent every year in going through the natural curing process, or which is generally termed the sweat. In my judgment the climatic condition has as much to do with the curing of tobaccos as it has the growing of it, and when both are favorable we have sound tobacco. The question I have been asked to treat with is artificial heat in curing tobaccos.

This, I believe, is the only safe way, and the only way known to me, to avoid damage from must, or even black rot. But great care must be exercised in the treatment of new tobaccos. In order to cure with artificial heat it is necessary to equip our warehouses for the work, which means to put in a steam boiler, pipe the building, and make such arrangements so that we can maintain a reasonable degree of heat and moisture in our curing rooms at any or all times.

In the treatment of cigar leaf wrappers or binders, taking them as they are regularly packed in the sorting room, they should be placed in curing room with the temperature about 60 degrees Fehrenheit. At this degree of heat fermentation will start slowly and thereby avoid the danger of giving the tobacco a re-sweat smell. The only moisture required at this period will come from the new tobacco in passing through what is commonly termed the water sweat.

My experience has been, where I have kept a hydrometer in my curing room to ascertain the humidity or moisture, that it would register at about 50 degrees or normal. After goods have been in the sweat from three to four weeks, a greater degree of
heat can be used without risk of damaging goods, and as the goods advance in the sweat it will be necessary to maintain a higher degree of temperature. I aim to run my curing room at 70 to 75 degrees. And as soon as the summer season comes on we only use artificial heat in the event of cold or damp rainy weather. One of the greatest advantages of artificial heat is to be able to maintain the proper degree of heat required for fermentation besides keeping our buildings sweet and free from damp, foul air, as the latter condition is sure to generate must or mould. Good results have been obtained by me in my experiments of curing new tobaccos by putting the goods in the curing room about four or five weeks, or until they are partly cured, and have shrunk about 7 per cent, then removing them to other storage above freezing point and allow them to finish in the natural sweat during the summer months.

It is conceded by nearly all that proper fermentation improves the aroma and quality of all tobacco. But the fad for light wrappers and binders has compelled the trade to throw upon the market a raw and uncured product which they can only obtain by light packing and not allowing the goods to ferment properly.

Tobaccos cured by artificial heat, when properly treated, have a tougher fibre, finer aroma and a surer burner than the natural sweat goods.

MARKETING THE TOBACCO CROP.

By F. W. Coon, Editor Edgerton Tobacco Reporter.

The most reliable statistics obtainable bring to light the information that Wisconsin is producing the largest amount of cigar leaf tobacco and selling the product at the smallest price per pound of any state in the Union. Just how much of this anomalous condition is due to the methods that prevail in preparing this crop for market is difficult to determine, but it is none the less a bad commentary upon the intelligence of our tobacco growers that this statement is true.