

adhering to the ear. If it were gathered in any other way, the loss by transportation on the backs of buffaloes and horses, without any covering to the sheaf, would be so great as to dissipate a great portion of the crop.

It appears almost incredible that any people can remain in ignorance of a way of preventing so extravagant and wasteful a mode of harvesting. The government has been requested to prohibit it on account of the great expense it gives rise to; but whether any steps have ever been taken in the matter, I did not learn. It is said that not unfrequently a third part of the crop is lost, in consequence of the scarcity of labourers; while those who are disengaged will refuse to work, unless they receive one-third, and even one-half of the crop, to be delivered free of expense at their houses. Thus the planters are often obliged to give, or lose the whole crop. Nay, unless the harvest is a good one, reapers are very unwilling to engage to take it even on these terms, and the entire crop is lost. The labourers, during the time of harvest, are supported by the planter, who is during that time exposed to great vexation, if not losses. The reapers are for the most part composed of the idle and vicious part of the population, who go abroad over the country to engage themselves in this employment, which affords a livelihood to the poorer classes; for the different periods at which the varieties of rice are planted and harvested, gives them work during a large portion of the year.

After the rice is harvested, there are different modes of treating it. Some of the proprietors take it home, where it is thrown into heaps, and left until it is desirable to separate it from the straw, when it is trodden out by men and women with their bare feet. For this operation, they usually receive another fifth of the rice.

Others stack it in a wet and green state, which subjects it to heat, from which cause the grain contracts a dark colour, and an unpleasant taste and smell. The natives, however, impute these defects to the wetness of the season.

The crop of both the low and upland rice, is usually from thirty to fifty for one: this is on old land; but on that which is newly cleared, or which has never been cultivated, the yield is far beyond this. In some soils of the latter description, it is said that for a chupa (seven cubic inches) planted, the yield has been a caban. The former is the two-hundred-and-eighth part of the latter. This is not the only advantage gained in planting rich lands, but the saving of labour is equally great; for all that is required is to make a hole with the fingers, and place three or four grains in it. The upland rice requires but little water, and is never irrigated.