

At the average rate of pulling, four men will be required to pull an acre in a day. Experiments have been made with machines for pulling flax, but further testing is necessary before they can be recommended. As there is very little fibre in the lowest inch of flax stem, it might be possible to cut the crop with comparatively little waste. This would only be practicable where the crop is of considerable height, and where the land has been rolled after sowing. The great difficulty in the way of devising a successful machine for handling flax at this stage is the ease with which the seed-bolls become entangled.



FIG. 6.—Flax bundle tied near the top and spread out at the base.

REMOVAL OF THE SEED.

The dried flax may be put into stacks, or stored in a barn until time can be found to remove and clean the seeds. If, however, it is intended to ret the flax during the season in which it is grown, the removal of the seed-capsules will require to be done at once, as retting cannot be accomplished satisfactorily if the weather is too cold. It would seem quite possible to save a considerable percentage of the seeds and ret the straw the same season without drying the flax in stooks. A flax plant branches slightly at the top, and the amount of fibre contained in these branches is, if the seed has been sown sufficiently thickly, of comparatively little moment. When the flax has been pulled and tied into bundles, it should be comparatively easy to remove these branching tops, at the ends of which the seed-bolls are situated, with a single stroke of a large, sharp knife. The seed-bolls could be placed on a large cloth and turned until they are dry, and the flax straw could be immediately retted. It is a method which might be used with advantage during wet weather, and it is practised to a considerable extent in parts of Russia.