

bear a good crop of flax at the end of the course. For this purpose a surplus of tillage and manure is given to each crop, so that the soil is deepened and ameliorated at each successive step, and is brought to as perfect a state as it will admit of by the time the turn comes to sow flax. This may remove the surprise which is naturally excited by amount of tillage and manure given to each crop, which appears, at first sight, far greater than can be required. The quantity of liquid manure poured over the light lands year after year, cannot fail to make them rich, and the frequent trenching with the spade, must, in the end, transform the whole soil, to a considerable depth, into a compost of rich vegetable and animal matter, intimately mixed with the natural earths. It is, in fact, an accumulation of humus, which is the best preparation to ensure a good crop of flax. It is not, therefore, to the immediate preparation of the soil for the flax, that its abundance or good quality is to be chiefly ascribed, but to a gradual system of amelioration, which has brought the soil into the high condition required for this plant.

The finest flax is raised in the neighbourhood of Courtray, where the soil is naturally of such a quality as flax requires. In other districts the soil requires more care and culture to make it produce anything approaching to the quality of the Courtray flax. In some, as in the Waes country, and more especially in the neighbourhood of Ghent, no exertions or manuring can produce flax which will bear comparison with the best; but they produce very good crops, notwithstanding, of a moderate quality; and they find it a profitable crop, which to the farmers is always an important point. If it were not for a course, continual improvements of the soil, they never could raise such flax as they now produce; nor would any soil or quantity of manure, put into the land at the time the flax is sown, produce so large or so good a crop as will grow in land gradually and properly prepared. It is necessary to premise this, in order to prevent disappointment when attempts are made to imitate the Flemish methods. If any one will follow the whole course on a similar soil, the result will be probably the same.

The crops which immediately precede flax in light soils, are barley, or rye, with turnips after them the same year. In this case these crops are more highly manured than usual; and the turnips have a double quality of liquid manure. About Christmas the turnips being taken off, the land is ploughed into high ridges, and the intervals dug out: it re-

mains in that state secure from wet and exposed to the winter's frost. As soon in spring as the weather permits, the land is again ploughed and well harrowed, to let the seeds of annual weeds vegetate. A month after, another deep ploughing and harrowing are given to bring it into good tilth, and clean it well. Peat ashes are now put on at the rate of thirty bushels to the acre, and these are spread and harrowed in: a few days after ten hog-heads of strong liquid manure—the emptyings of privies preferred—is poured regularly over; and thus it is left for a week or ten days, that the manure may soak in. The seed is then sown: the quantity varies; but is always very abundant—160 lbs. are generally sown on an acre. The seed is slightly covered by a bush harrow, or the traineau drawn over the land: more than half-an-inch of earth over it would prevent its vegetating. Cloudy or showery weather is chosen for sowing it, as a very hot and dry air might also prevent its raising. The best seed is imported from Riga. The first crop of seed raised from the Riga seed is sometimes used; but it is supposed to degenerate fast; and the home-raised seed is said to produce coarse branched flax. This, however, is maintained by others to be a mere prejudice; and it is recommended to sow a spot thinly, and give the plants room to grow and perfect their seed. The flax of these plants will be much inferior; but the seed will be good and plump, and equal to the Riga seed for sowing. The question arises still, which is the cheapest method, to raise seed thus, or to import it? This is a matter of simple calculation; and we must leave the flax growers to decide it.

About Courtray the method is somewhat varied, the flax is sown earlier: the soil being peculiarly suited to this crop—less preparation is required. The preceding crop, which is frequently colza or oats, receives a double portion of manure; some very rotten dung is ploughed in with the stubble, and is completely decomposed during the winter. Early in spring the ground is ploughed and harrowed across; liquid manure is poured on as before, and the seed is sown. The quantity and nature of the manure depends on the state of the soil as to fertility, especial care being taken that no hot dung be used, and nothing which by any chance can increase weeds. Rape cake, dissolved in urine, or ground to a powder, is a favourite manure. Six hundred to one thousand rape cakes, and one thousand gallons of urine, are often put on an acre of land on which flax is to be sown. It is an essential condition, that previous to the sowing of the