

weather, rather than incur the risk of the crop being destroyed by a spring frost.

When Hemp is sown prior to the 12th of May, it is fit to pull for white or linen purposes about the 12th of August: previous to that period, the fibre will *not have set*, nor the male have shed its pollen. It was a practice many years ago, when White Hemp ruled high, to pull the weak plants and all the male stems immediately after the pollen was shed, and leave the female stems to stand for seed. This labour was performed by women and old men. The price of pulling 100 gleans, as they were termed, was 1s., or 1s. 2d. per hundred of six score. After the Hemp was pulled and tied round the head with four or five of its own stalks, it was laid down in rows with the root part spread out; and a man went round in the evening, with a boy or woman, to set it up in stocks of five or six gleans—the boy taking a fork, such as farmers generally use, to knock and shake out the soil from the roots, and scrape out the undergrowth that lies in the bottom of the stems. In the course of a few days it will be ready to take to the water; before doing so, it will require tying near the roots. This is usually done with a band composed of twisted leaf-reed, cut for the purpose two or three days previously. The gleans must then be jumped on the ground to level the roots. When the Hemp is carried to the water, care must be taken that the tops of the Hemp hang well over the sides in order to cover the stems well; for if the covering sods touch the stems at the sides, the fibres turn black at the points of contact. The sods with which it is necessary to cover the Hemp whilst in the water are generally cut adjacent thereto, and are usually replaced when done with. The sods are sometimes cut with a rip and sod-spade; sometimes with a paring plough, and then cut into short lengths by a spade. Great attention has to be paid to the process of watering or retting. After laying the sods over the heap, they must be frequently trod upon, in order to sink them, and make the water appear between the sods; care must be taken that the roots of the Hemp are put lowest in the water. The treading must be repeated every day, until the Hemp is ready to be taken out of the water, which will be from nine to ten days if the weather is warm, and rather longer if the weather is cold. Considerable experience is requisite before a person becomes a thorough judge on this point. The following rules, if strictly followed, will serve as pretty safe guides:—When the retting is supposed to have gone far enough, take a glean from the middle of the water, from which take out a stem; then hold the stem by the root end, and draw the thumb-nail up the stem to the top. If the fibre slip up the stem it will be sufficiently retted; if not, it will require another day, or perhaps more. Also spread the glean on its side to dry; it will

do so in the course of the day: if the stem then breaks freely, and the fibre leaves it easily, it will be properly retted.

The sods must now be taken off. Two men will be required to take out the gleans—one to lift them partly out of the water with a fork, and land them on the ground, which is technically termed a couch. The next day (for if suffered to remain longer on the couch, it heats and rots) it is carted out and taken to grass land that has been mown and the hay taken therefrom for some time, so that a considerable quantity of new grass has grown, which prevents the fibre from being much injured by worms. When laid out on the eddish, it should be evenly spread, by women, in rows. It will require to lie on the eddish perhaps three weeks or more, for the fibre to become free and bleached. It will require turning over with a light pole, putting the pole underneath the top part, and lifting it over. This must be done very nearly every three or four days, usually by women.

To ascertain when it has lain sufficiently on the grass, the grower must within ten days examine the stems in different parts of the field; if any pink spots are discovered on the stems, it will be sufficiently bleached, if not it must lie longer; there can be no fear of the fibre deteriorating until the pink spots appear, which by frequent turning may occupy three weeks. The hemp must then be gathered, tied into bundles, and set into stocks to dry (the stocks consisting of ten or twelve bundles each,) and tied from the middle bundle of each side to each end, to keep the wind from blowing it over. When perfectly dry, it must be carried from the field and placed in a barn, or ricked in some exposed part, with a cullis roof to keep it dry. The scutching has next to be provided for. The scutchers should be instructed to make up the Hemp carefully into bundles of half-stones each comprised of four heads, and tied round with their own heads tightly drawn through the hands. The pullings, as they are termed are tied up into half-stones with a band round the middle, the ends drawn together tied in a knot.

The female, or Seed Hemp, if allowed to stand for seed, should be treated as follows:—In the early part of September the Seed Hemp will be ready for pulling: this may be known by observing and examining the four low seeds on the stem, called by growers elbow-seed; if they are of a dark grey colour, firm inside, and the husks turning a little yellow, it is fit to pull. At this season strong winds sometimes occur, sufficient to break some of the Seed Hemp; instructions should therefore be given, in gathering, to collect the fallen stems (as they contain seed,) and be careful not to break the stem, or cramp it with the hand. Breaking is very detrimental to Hemp.

The Seed Hemp should be set up in stocks of forty gleans each, and the under-growth