

imported from all other countries; and the average annual quantity of flax seed imported by Great Britain was 5,426,744 bushels, being more than five-sixths of the whole flax seed imported. "It is, however," says the *Economist*, "by no means improbable that some of these products of the Czar's empire will find access to our markets by a round-about road through other countries, though at an increased price to the British consumer, and this will be more apparent when we remember what devices were had recourse to in the French war, such as bringing silk from Italy round by Constantinople and all through Germany to England. That the price of the article will however be generally enhanced cannot be doubted." In fact, the price of flax is at this very time so high that I heard, when in Ireland lately, of many farmers who had netted £25, and even £30 sterling per acre—the price ranging from 50s. to 80s. sterling per cwt., (about 5½d. to 9d. sterling per lb.) There are very many late North of Ireland, Scotch and Dutch farmers now resident in Canada who perfectly understand its culture and preparation for market—the difficulty is the want of machinery. Whilst in the Province of Ulster lately, I visited some of the very best flax-mills, of the latest and simplest construction. There was one especially in Comber, County of Down, that worked most speedily and efficiently, preparing the flax for market through all its stages, after being rotted and dried. It was turned by a small water-power, and the entire cost of its erection, materials, machinery and everything, was under £200 sterling. Mr. Andrews, of Comber, Lord Londonderry's agent, told me that there would be no difficulty in procuring a mill-wright to go over to Canada to erect similar ones, perfect in every respect, by paying him £100 sterling for a year's work, and that they would not cost £200, exclusive of the water-power. The mill was of course not large, but there was a shed adjoining for storing the flax and putting it through the first process—viz., straightening for the scutcher. The great matter for Canada would be to have a machine constructed that we could attach to our horse-powers, so many of which are now owned by our farmers in the Upper Province, or to the wind-powers of the Lower Province; but the simplicity and cheapness of water-power flax-mills may induce their erection by two or three private individuals uniting together for that purpose. The Agricultural Association would promote the interests of Canada very much indeed by offering so hand-

some a premium as would induce some of our mechanics to construct machinery adapted to the wants of our country. The premium ought to be of such an amount as would induce persons of small capital to spend time and means to effect its construction.

The cultivation of flax would be useful to us as farmers, not only on account of the direct profit which the crop, properly managed, would produce, even at the present high rate of freight, but that it would also add another crop to our *rotation*, and relieve the land from the eternal wheat-cropping which sooner or later—conducted as it is in Canada—must prostrate the energies of our soil.

Even supposing that flax is quite as severe a crop upon the soil as wheat, yet the very *change* would be beneficial, and the seed well made use of at home would entirely remunerate the farmer for the loss of straw. Mr. Roche, M.P. for the County of Cork, had 2,500 acres of flax on his estate, which would yield 7,000 barrels of flax seed, (2½ bushels per barrel), i.e., seven bushels per acre, worth 6s. per bushel here, being 7s. 6d. sterling in England.

It is not uncommon now to sow clover seed along with the flax, and the pulling of the flax is very beneficial to the growing clover plant, by moulding it and admitting the air. I saw very beautiful clover cultivated in this way.

At a late meeting of the Royal Society for the promotion of the growth of flax the Chairman, Sharman Crawford, Esq., exhibited two specimens of the flax plant, each upwards of four feet long, and in every respect equal, one being grown from Riga seed, and the other from home-saved seed of the first year's saving. Both were sown on the same field the same day, and treated alike throughout, "in order," says Mr. C., "that the result should satisfy farmers as to the value of home-saved seed."

There is great discussion at present in the flax growing countries about the best system of retting (sometimes called rotting). Mr. McAdam, the Secretary of the Royal Society for the promotion of the growth of flax, showed me a great many varieties of samples retted by different processes. The best was that done in good running water, suitable for the purpose; and the prevailing opinion appeared to be, that if good water was to be had, and a knowledge of the process withheld—the old-fashioned way, though the most tedious and protracted, produced the finest and best flax.