

FLAX CROPS AND SUPPLY.—The official return of the breadth of land under flax in Ireland has now been published, and the following is the gratifying result:—

Under flax in 1859 136,000 acres.

“ last year 91,000 “

showing an increase this year of nearly 50 per cent. The crop in the Riga districts is now known to be large, and of fine well-grown quality, and the same has fortunately to be said of the crops in France, Belgium, and Holland. Last accounts from Riga report that “the weather continues very favourable, and we may look forward to an abundant flax crop.” From Ghent they say, “reports from the country give a great yield from the straw. The flax is very strong and healthy, and quality satisfactory.”

FLAX SUPPLIES FROM INDIA.—The *Daily News* in a leader on the subject of the colonisation of India remarks:—“When the Russian war began, we were alarmed for our supplies of hemp and flax. The moment we hailed India, she sent us such a supply as we never had from her before. She is much more fit to grow hemp than Russia is; and there is no reason why we should not obtain all we want. Hemp is grown everywhere now, and if it were not it would grow of itself. It is planted wide, to produce bhang to intoxicate the natives, instead of being planted close, to produce long fibre. Send out a demand for it, and there will be settlers who will grow it, as there are to grow indigo; there will be less bhang and more fibre, and the cultivator will have the wherewithal to intoxicate himself in some other way, at a cheaper rate, if his improved condition does not wean him from the habit. We need not enlarge on the peril in which our Irish and Scotch linen manufacturers are involved by the present failure and constant uncertainty of the supply of flax. Any one who has seen the flax of the North Western Provinces, as grown in the Agricultural Society’s garden at Lahore, will at once perceive what a mine of wealth would be opened to-morrow, if we took as much pains with flax growing in the Nerbudda Valley, and many others, as with our root crops at home.”

WHAT CAN BE DONE WITH PAPER.

A writer in *Blackwood’s Magazine* says it is wonderful to see the thousand useful as well as ornamental purposes to which paper is applicable in the hands of the Japanese. He states that he saw it made into materials so closely resembling Russian and morocco leather and pig skin, that it was very difficult to detect the difference. With the aid of lacker varnish and skilful painting, paper made excellent trunks, tobacco bags, cigar cases, saddles, telescope cases, the frame of microscopes; and he even saw and used excellent water-proof coats made of paper, which did keep out the rain, and were as supple as the best Mackintosh. The Japanese use neither silk nor cotton handkerchiefs, towels nor dusters; paper in their hands serves as an excellent substitute. It is soft, thin, tough, of a pale yellow color, very plentiful and very cheap. The inner walls of many a Japanese apartment are formed of paper, being nothing