

miums given, and the publication of such answers would instruct other farmers. We wish premiums were paid upon the same principle with us.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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### FLAX GROWING.

BY RUSTICUS.

The omission of a figure in my last letter was the cause of an apparent discrepancy between the tenor of my remarks, with regard to the extent of the existing demand for flax, and my statement of its estimated value. Mr. Montgomery Martin assumed the average value of a ton of flax to be fifty pounds sterling, and he ascertained that the quantity used for manufacturing purposes in the United Kingdom was 100,000 tons, which makes the gross value of flax consumed to be £5,000,000 sterling. This estimate of its value will be found to be a pretty correct one, but as it is important that our farmers, and all who are interested in the development of the agricultural capabilities of the country, should be fully convinced of its accuracy, I add, in corroboration of the calculation given above, an extract from a letter published a couple of years or so ago by Mr. James Hill Dickson of London, and addressed to the Agriculturists of England, on the subject of flax growing. It contains some valuable statements, which are calculated to throw considerable light on the probability of the flax crop being found a remunerative one. In view of the uncertainty of the greater part of our staple crops in this part of the Province, the prospect of such an illimitable market should induce us to take steps to encourage the growth of flax. Mr. Dickson says that it yields more than double the profit of any other crop: "I propose," says he, "that a public joint stock company be commenced, and that branch establishments be formed in every district throughout England, Ireland and Scotland. When it is found that the soil is adapted for the growth and cultivation of flax, such a company will, no doubt, meet with the support of every landed proprietor who wishes to improve not only his estate but the condition of his tenantry, and give increased employment to the agricultural

labourers; and there is no doubt but such a company will have the support of most of the flax spinners of Yorkshire and Lancashire—several of whom have, to their great credit, amassed princely fortunes by their improvements in spinning this article to perfection within the last twenty years. Those gentlemen are not only likely to become shareholders, but will be glad to encourage the growth of flax in these kingdoms, and, as to the profits likely to accrue to the shareholders in such a speculation, I am prepared to prove that money so invested could not be more profitably nor more safely employed than it would be under the management and direction of such a company as I think may be established. Why is it that nearly three-fourths of the population of this great city wear *cotton shirts with linen breasts*? Because of the extravagant prices of foreign flax, and the difficulty spinners have to get what is suited to their wants; they cannot get flax to make what we term 16<sup>o</sup>, or shirting linens, below £60 to £70 per ton; and if they require finer qualities, the price then starts to £80, £100, to £120, and so on up to £160 per ton for very fine flax; and previous to the Irish farmers turning their attention to the cultivation and management on the Belgian system, which has enabled them so to supply their own spinners, that one of them said this year at the annual meeting of the Belfast Flax Society, that formerly they paid £40,000 to the continent for flax, but this year the supply at home caused them not to send 40s. out of their own country for flax; previous to this foreign flax was from 15 to 25 per cent more than the prices just now, and the consequence was that yarns (say number 60 to 80 lea, which are calculated for a shirting web) were sold in 1834 at 10s. to 11s. per bundle: and now in consequence of the increased quantity of Irish flax, the same numbers and quality, produced by the same spinners, are selling at 5s. to 5s. 9d. per bundle. It may be said if more be grown, the prices will come down; that I altogether deny, and I refer parties to make inquiries—in 1828, 1829, up to 1834, the prices for these seven years, and the prices for the last seven years, during which time the growing has increased ten-fold—the alteration in prices has been hardly worth talking about."

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