

Although the flax has been pulled very green, it has always a little half-formed seed which must be taken off—not for its value, but because the flax must be cleansed from all its chaff, leaves and dust; and in order to remove with greater facility every particle of dust, it is exposed on fine days to the sun, and rubbed a few stalks at a time, then bleached on the grass three or four days immediately before steeping. It is steeped when the water is at least a temperature of 50°. When taken from the water it is set up in caps to dry, and when dry it is spread on the grass for three or four days, after which it is tied up in bundles and sent to be scutched and scraped.

The latter process is one of great nicety and peculiarity; it is first half scutched, and then scraped with an iron scraper, and finally brushed.

This flax is worth from £300 to £350, stg., per ton. It is estimated that when one ton of this flax is manufactured into superior Brussels lace, called "*dentelle point de Bruxelles*," it produces £60,000.

I have often thought that some mechanical contrivance, or modification of the plan above described, as practised with such success in growing flax near Tournay, would be found suitable, on a certain scale, in the cultivation of grass and grain.

Every one has noticed the *Laportea Canadensis* (Canadian nettle) shooting up its lengthy stem through the brushwood pile in the corners of neglected fields, or the tiny vetch struggling by its side to gain the air and light.

Could a double net-work then, of wire or other material, be set up; at small expense, at heights of two, three and four feet, above our growing crops of grass and grain, the capillary attraction, so to speak, or the struggling of the plants to reach the unclouded light above, would be so great as to increase the yield per acre of grass and straw, and may be too, the yield of grain.

On the debit side there would be the cost of storage, of material, of laying it, and of taking it away.

The practical solution of this problem will form an interesting study in those countries where the question of food supply forces itself on intelligent minds, so that the wants of dense populations may be met.

The idea, therefore, is given to the world for what it may be worth.

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