

FLAX.

We are much obliged to William J. Knox, Esq., of Lachine Mills, for the following excellent letter on flax, and we hope he will continue his correspondence on the same subject, as it is one of great importance to Canada, if we act in the matter properly. We conceive that flax can be produced here in great perfection, and provided the land is clean (which would be necessary for any other crop), it is as easy to cultivate and manage as a crop of wheat, and if sold in the field, in stack, will be less troublesome than wheat. As, however, all the produce of the crop is sold off, the land must subsequently be manured in proportion. From our own experience, we do not consider flax a very scourging or severe crop; a heavy crop of wheat or oats, we believe, would impoverish the soil much more than a crop of flax, and the land is left very clean after the latter. We raised excellent flax this year on land ploughed last fall after meadow; the soil a sandy loam of fair quality. In the spring it was well harrowed, and about 15 bushels of wood ashes applied to the acre, with about 2 bushels of salt and 1 cwt. of gypsum, all mixed together. The ridges were about 8 feet wide, and the plough was run in the furrows between, and the loose soil shovelled over the ridges. The land was again harrowed lightly, and the seed sown, and covered with a bush-harrow, and any grass or stones upon the ridges hand-picked. There was a ridge of land upon which potatoes were raised last year, with manure, by the side of that described above, also sown with flax this spring, but without any dressing, and the crop upon this ridge was much inferior to that raised after meadow last year. There is very little doubt if we had parties to purchase flax immediately after it was raised by the farmer, it would be extensively cultivated, and prove a profitable crop for the agriculturist, but until there is a cer-

tainty of a purchaser, the cultivation of flax is not likely to be large. Cleaner and better seed than is to be procured here is another essential requisite for the production of good flax.

Dear Sir,—As you were desirous of hearing what I had learned in Europe, respecting the cultivation and management of flax, I shall give you in a letter the result of my observations:—

Flax seems to be grown chiefly in those countries most resembling the North American Provinces in climate and soil, viz:—the North of Europe, France and Ireland.

Owing to the very flourishing state of the linen manufacture in Ireland, more attention is turned at present towards the cultivation and management of flax in that country than in any other.

It appears that the manufacture of linen is now so extensively carried on in the neighborhood of Belfast, that all the flax that can be procured from foreign countries, is not sufficient to meet the demand; and societies are established, not only by the manufacturers, but by those interested in land, and in short, by all classes of people, for the encouragement of the growth of flax. Both that the industry of that Island may be stimulated by the introduction of flax crops, which will pay better than any grain crop is likely to do at present: and also, that instead of paying foreign nations five millions of money for the supply of flax, that money may be paid to their own farmers, to fructify, as they say in their own country.

Whether this is sound political economy according to the theories of the professors of that science, is a subject I did not hear discussed. They seemed not to have much taste for peering into the mists and obscurities, but to keep their eyes fixed on the glaring truth, that it is better to give five millions to their own farmers than to give the same sum to the farmers of Russia and Flanders. They therefore hold out all inducements to get their own people to cultivate, and have paid agents, who travel through the country and teach the best methods of cultivating and preparing for market.

The first thing to be considered then, is to procure good seed, this they have long been in the habit of importing from Russia and