

should not be more largely adopted. By this method the bundles are set up on end for an hour or more to drain. The stones taken from the dam, before the flax is removed, can be used as a support for the first row, if they are piled on top of each other, or the flax bundles may be laid against a low wooden rail. When the water has drained off sufficiently, the band is removed, the bundle opened out, and the flax straw, after being shaken, is set up against each side of a wooden rail about 18 inches from the ground (fig. 12). When quite dry it can be tied up into large bundles, and should then be

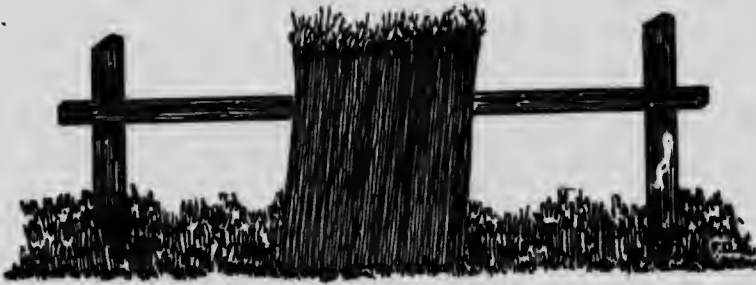


FIG. 12.—Method of "gating" flax. A stout nail driven into the upright stake serves as a rest for the horizontal rail.

stacked or housed. The advantages of gating are: that the flax is much easier to dry if the weather is wet, less ground is required, and much less stooping is necessary on the part of the worker.

#### SCUTCHING.

Scutching is the operation by which the fibre is separated from the central woody zone or shove. It is usually performed during the winter months, and requires an experienced workman. Flax before being scutched is first passed through a "brake." This consists of a number of rollers, some grooved, some smooth, and revolving at different rates. As the flax straw passes between these, the shove is crushed and broken into short lengths, and is easily knocked off from the fibre during scutching. The principle of braking flax is shown in fig. 13.

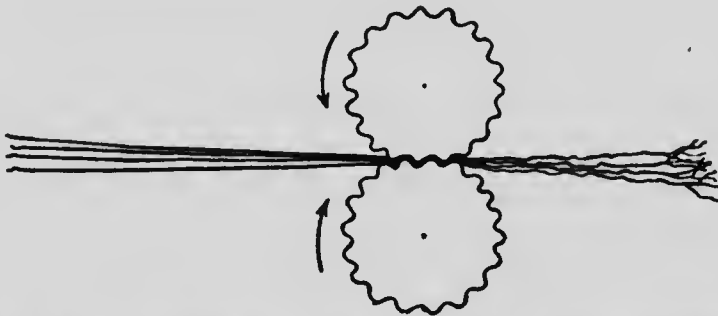


FIG. 13.—Flax passing between two rollers of the brake. The arrows indicate the direction of movement of the rollers.