

bers, premiums paid, &c, which require little labour or time in preparation, must of course be submitted and adopted at the annual meeting, and would not require, or admit of, if correct, any change. But the portion referred to in the notice in the *Agriculturist* as part 3, and prescribed by the act in the words "together with such remarks and suggestions upon the Agriculture and Horticulture of the County (or township), and arts and manufactures therein, as the Directors shall be enabled to offer," necessarily admits of considerable latitude or discretion as to the matter it shall contain, on the part of the writer or of the society adopting it. It was therefore conceived that, in cases where there had not been sufficient time to draw up such a report as the society or the person writing it would desire to forward, it would not be contrary to the spirit of the act, for it to be adopted *pro forma* at the annual meeting, and afterwards amended; always provided, however, that the amendments should receive the sanction of the Directors, and that the report should be duly certified, and forwarded through the proper channel. But the amendment of the report could not be allowed in any case to prevent it being forwarded to the Board of Agriculture at the time required by the law. We are glad to find the subject of the reports attracting attention, and shall be most happy to publish that from our correspondent as receiving the highest prize,—if he earns it.—Eds.]

THE CULTIVATION OF FLAX.

Continued from page 77.

The handfuls of flax when pulled should be laid by themselves on the ground, or two or three diagonally across each other, taking care to have the but-ends even.—Three methods may now be adopted in its future treatment.

1st—It may be rippled immediately after pulling, and steeped at once.

2nd—It may be dried in stooks of a peculiar structure, the seeds beaten off, and the stems steeped shortly afterwards.

3rd—It may be dried too, stored, seed beaten off in winter, and the flax steeped in the following summer.

The first method is that most generally followed in this country—at all events it is the mode which I have experienced in the province of *Ulster*, where there are some of the most enterprising flax growers in Ireland. The rippling process means the separation of the seed-bolls from the stems by drawing them quickly through a machine made up of a row of iron pins about eighteen inches long, half an inch square, a quarter of an inch apart from each other at their base, and tapering nicely to within half an inch asunder at the tops, which are sharpened. When the rippling is going on a winnowing sheet must be placed under the apparatus so as to catch the bolls as they are rippled off. The sheaves are left on the right hand side of every rippler, he taking up a handful and holding it with one hand while with the other he spreads out the top so as to present a broad surface to the pins. If the bolls are thick two draws are necessary through the machine. Four men with two rippling apparatuses will take the seed off more than an acre in the day. The bolls are riddled to separate the long stalks that may be among them, and then put through fanners to blow off the leaves. If the weather be dry they should be spread on the winnowing sheet with the sun, and turned over two or three times a day. When dry or nearly so they should be removed to a corn kiln, and by a gentle heat they will be well finished, so as to keep dry for a length of time without fermenting.

If rippling has not been carried on as described it may when dry in the stooks be carried home on carts, and beetled, after which it may be steeped. This process of beetling is usually performed by what is generally called a beetle, which consists of a block of wood about ten inches long and and three or four inches square, into which a handle is inserted, more generally the handle is a prolongation of the head made small for the hand to hold. By such an implement the seed can be beaten out.

When the flax is steeped in the green state, as I invariably have seen it, the seed is separated by the ripplers. In the former case of beetling we do not require to put the bolls on a kiln at all, for in this case it is dry enough. We merely require to winnow like grain to free it from the chaff.