

the old method so manifest, both in respect to time, quantity and quality of produce, that it is somewhat remarkable that, notwithstanding the knowledge which existed of the value of temperature in respect to fermentation, even indeed in reference to flax itself, it has only so comparatively recently been employed.*

In the Report of the Committee of the New York State Agricultural Society (Feb. 1863) the following words occur: "It seems to us that our experimentalists have much neglected Mr. Schenck's method of steeping the flax in warm water at ninety degrees, with Mr. Pownall's improvements in exposing the steeped straw to the pressure of a pair of smooth iron cylinders, while at the same time a stream of water is made to flow upon the rollers, so as to wash away the softened organic matters which adhere to it." Numerous other processes for separating the fibre have been invented and to a small extent practised, but they are not suitable to Canada.

Flax-Cotton.

The process for the manufacture of flax-cotton which some years ago excited so much attention in connection with the name of the unfortunate M. Claussen, although previously discovered by Lady Moira, in 1775, failed on account of the attempt to obtain uniformity in the length of the fibre by the simple process of cutting, which had the effect of leaving rough or "stumpy" ends, which so impaired the quality of fabrics made from the so called flax-cotton as to prove fatal to the success of the process. Nevertheless, well founded expectations are entertained that flax cotton is no idle dream, and that a process will soon be developed for obtaining this result. Indeed so confident are persons interested in the cultivation of flax in the ultimate success of the project, that the United States Commissioner of the Census states in his report published in 1862, that "the manufacture of fabrics from flax-cotton has been commenced and success in a new branch of industry is confidently expected."

Encouragement of Home Industry.

With respect then to the encouragement of the cultivation of flax in Canada it appears essential that the following steps require to be taken:

1. The annual importation and subsequent distribution under careful and responsible supervision of a certain amount of Riga Flax Seed.

2. The establishment of flax growing districts, in each of which a flax mill for the preparation of the fibre should be established and efficiently sustained.

3. The purchase from the farmer of crude flax straw by flax factors at the district mills.

The introduction of Schenck's improved process and the employment of Rowan's scutching machines.

It is not to be supposed that the purchase of flax straw, at the district mills, precludes the purchase of fibre prepared by the farmer by the steeping or dew-retting process, it is rather to secure a certain market for flax-straw in suitable condition, and by the employment of Schenck's process, and Rowan's scutching machine to prepare an article for exportation which shall by the price it will command abroad encourage private enterprise to establish mills in all suitable localities.

It is suggested that any government aid which the Minister of Agriculture may be disposed to recommend should be placed at the disposal of the Boards of Agriculture for Upper and Lower Canada for the purpose of importing Riga Seed; also that handsome premiums be offered for a certain number of bales of flax, the produce of *district mills* either erected by private enterprise or joint stock companies, where crude straw would be purchased from the farmer and manufactured into merchantable fibre.

The experience of the past two years shows that the efforts which have been made in various parts of Upper and Lower Canada to encourage the cultivation of flax among our farmers is beginning to produce good results,* but before the introduction

*BRITISH AMERICAN LAND COMPANY,
Shorbrooke, C.E., 23rd June, 1863.

DEAR SIR,—I hasten to reply to your letter of the 20th instant just received.

I can give you no exact statistics, but a few words will convey to you what has been done, and is now doing, on the subject by our people.

Throughout Lower Canada, some years ago, every farmer—whether French Canadian in the Seignories, or English in the townships—grew more or less flax for domestic use. The French still continue the growth, for their own domestic manufacture, in small garden patches; but the practice was almost entirely discontinued in the townships when cotton goods took the place of the home-made linens to a great extent. The cultivation of flax is now being revived, but not for domestic use so much as for export to England, Ireland, and the United States. The quantity grown has been as yet very small, but it is increasing rapidly, the only drawback being that the farmers are slow to be convinced that the market is likely to be permanent.

The townships of Eaton, Ascot, and Lingwick grew a small quantity last year. I have had the Eaton flax—which was dew-retted only—scutched by Rowan's machine, and have sent two sample bales home—one to Messrs. Marshall, of Leeds, the other to Belfast—to get a report as to quality, &c. The report from Messrs. Marshall is, on the whole, very favourable. I am, as yet, without any report from Belfast; but I believe they are spinning and making the flax into cloth, with the view of shewing its capabilities.

This year I have distributed about two hundred bushels of seed in the townships of Bury, Lingwick, and Eaton, and as the season is much more favourable than last year, I anticipate a very good result; I hope also to have this flax water-retted and not dew-retted.

* "Our Farm Crops."