

carefully handed out of the flax drain by men standing in the water. It is advantageous to let flax drain twelve to twenty-four hours, after being taken from the pool, by placing the bundles on their root ends, close together, or on the flat, with the sloop; but the heaps should not be too large, otherwise the flax will be injured by heating. The flax water can be either used as liquid manure for meadows, or kept in the pool till the first flood,—it should not be run off into the river when the water is very low, as the odour is very unpleasant, and the water thus impregnated is poisonous to fish, and contrary to law,—see Fisheries Act, 5 and 6 Vic., c. 106.

**SPREADING.**—Select, when possible, clean, short, thick pasture ground for this operation; and mow down and remove any weeds that rise above the surface of the sward. Lay the flax evenly on the grass, and spread thin and very equally. If the directions under the head of rippling have been attended to, the handfuls will come readily asunder without entangling. Some people recommend turning it on the grass with a long rod, which is not, however, generally done in Ireland.

**LIFTING.**—Six to eight days, if the weather be showery, or ten to twelve, if it be dry, should be sufficient on the grass. Ten days may be taken as an average in ordinary weather. A good test of its being ready to lift is to rub a few stalks from the top to the bottom; and when the wood breaks easily, and separates from the fibre, leaving it sound, it has had enough of the grass. Also, when a large proportion of the stalks are perceived to form a *bow and string*, from the fibre contracting and separating from the woody stalk. But the most certain way is, to prove a small quantity with the hand break, or in a flax mill. In lifting, keep the lengths straight and the ends even, otherwise great loss will occur in the rolling and scutching. If heavy dews or damp weather prevail, don't lift after 3 o'clock, p.m. Let it be set up to dry for a few hours, and afterwards tie it up in small bundles; and, if not taken soon to be scutched, it will be much improved by being put up in small stacks, loosely built, with stones or lrambles in the bottom to keep it dry, and allow a free circulation of air. Stacks built on pillars would be the best.

**DRYING**, by fire, is *always most pernicious*. If properly steeped and grassed, no such drying is necessary; but to make it ready for breaking and scutching, exposure to the sun is sufficient. In some districts it is put to dry on kilns in a damp state, and is absolutely burned before it is dry, and the rich oily appearance of the flax is always greatly impaired.

**BREAKING AND SCUTCHING.**—If done by hand, try the Belgian system, which is considered superior to that practised in Ireland. If by milling, the farmer will do well to select those mills in which good machinery has been introduced; and it is to be hoped that, ere long, by further

improvements, increased economy in these establishments will be attained.

**THE COURTRAI SYSTEM.**—This mode of preparation requires to be very carefully executed, as inattention will reduce the value of the straw, and yield inferior fibre. When made up for drying in large sheaves, the straw is much injured, the outside stalks being much discoloured by the heat of the sun before the inside of the sheaf is dry. The flax stems should be put together in bunches, about one-half larger than a man can grasp in one hand, spread a little, and laid on the ground in rows after each puller; the bunches laid with tops and roots alternately, which prevents the seed bolls from sticking to each other in lifting. It should be stooked as soon after pulling as possible, and never allowed to remain over-night unstocked, except in settled weather. The stooking should go on at the same time as the pulling, as, if flax is allowed to get ra'n while on the ground, its colour is injured. A well-trained stooker will put up the produce of a statute acre or more, in good order in a day, with two boys or girls to hand him the bunches. The flax should be handed with the tops to the stooker. The handfuls, as pulled, are set up, resting against each other,—the root ends spread well out, and the tops joining, like the letter A. The stooks are made eight to ten feet long, and a short strap keeps the ends firm. The stooks should be very narrow on the top, and thinly put up, so that they may get the full benefit of the weather. In six or eight days at most, after being pulled, the flax should be ready for tying up in sheaves of the size of one sheave. It is then ricked, and allowed to stand in the field until the seed is dry enough for stacking. To build the rick, lay two poles parallel on the ground, about a foot asunder, with strong upright pole at each end. The flax is then built, the length of a sheaf in thickness and breadth. The bottom poles should be laid North and South, so that the sun shall get at both sides of the rick during the day. In building, the sheaves should be laid tops and roots alternately, built seven to eight feet high, and on the top a single row of sheaves lengthwise, or across the rick, and then another row as before, but with the tops all the same way, which gives a slope to throw off rain; finish by putting on the top a little straw tied with a rope. In this way, properly built, it will stand secure for months, or it can be put in a barn, if preferred; in either case, the seed is to be taken off during the winter, and the flax steeped in the following May.

*Note.*—In arranging the foregoing directions for the management of the flax crop, we have adhered very closely to the original text of the late Royal Flax Improvement Society. The alterations and abbreviations we have thought desirable, are, in our opinion, required to