

on the grass, and not interlock, and be put out of their even order, as would otherwise be the case. If the weather be dry, the bolls should be kept in the field, spread on winnow cloths, or other contrivance for drying; and, if turned from time to time, they will win. Passing the bolls first through a coarse riddle, and afterwards through fanners, to remove straws and leaves, will facilitate the drying. If the weather is moist, they should be taken in-doors, and spread out thinly and evenly on a barn floor, or in a loft, leaving windows and doors open, to allow a thorough current of air; and turned twice a-day. When *nearly dry*, they may be taken to a corn kiln (taking care not to raise it above Summer heat,) and carefully turned, until no moisture remains. By the above plan of *slow drying*, the seed has time to imbibe all the juices that remain in the husk, and become perfectly ripe. If it be taken at once from the field, and dried *hurriedly* on the kiln, these juices will be burned up, and the seed will become shrivelled and parched, little nutritious matter remaining. In fine seasons, the bolls should always be dried in the open air, the seed thrashed out, and the heaviest and plumpest used for sowing or crushing. The light seeds and chaff form most wholesome and nutritious feeding for cattle. Flax ought not to be allowed to stand in the field if possible, even the second day; it should be riddled as soon as pulled, and carried to the water, as soon as possible, that it may not harden.

WATERING.

This process requires the greatest care and attention. River water is the best. If spring water has to be used, let the pond be filled some weeks, or months, if possible, before the flax is put in, that the sun and air may soften the water. That containing iron, or other mineral substances, should never be used. If river water can be had, it need not be let into the pond sooner than the day before the flax is to be steeped. Place the flax in the pool in one layer somewhat sloped, and in regular rows, with the root end uppermost. Cover with moss sods, or tough old lea sods, laid perfectly close, the sheer of each fitted to the other. Before putting on the sods a layer of rushes or ragweeds is recommended to place on the flax, especially in new ponds. Thus covered, it never sinks to the bottom, nor is it affected by air or light. A small stream of water allowed to run through a pool has been found to improve its colour. It will be sufficiently steeped in an average time, from eight to fourteen days, according to the heat of the weather, and the nature of the water. Every grower should learn to know when the flax has had enough of the water, as a few hours too much may injure it. It is, however, much more frequently *under watered* than *over watered*. The best test is the following:—Try some stalks of average thickness, by breaking the *shove* or woody part, in two places, about six or eight inches apart, at the middle of the stalk; catch the broken bit of wood, and if it *will pull freely out, downwards, for that length, without breaking or tearing the fibre, and with none of the fibre adhering to it*, it is ready to take out. Make this trial every six hours, after fermentation subsides, for sometimes the change is rapid. Never lift the flax roughly from the pool, with forks or grapes, but have it carefully handed out on the bank, by men standing in the water. Spread on the same day it is taken out, unless it be raining heavy; light rain does little harm. If it cannot be spread, let it be set on end, or separated into small parcels, to pre-

vent it heating in the heap. It is advantageous to let the flax drain for a few hours, after being taken from the pool, by placing the bundles on their ends, close together, or on the flat, with a slope.

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 assunder, without entangling. Turn it two or three times, while on the grass (with a rod about eight feet in length, and an inch and a half in diameter), that it may not become of different shades, by the unequal action of the sun, which is often the case, through inattention to this point. Turn it when there is a prospect of rain, that the flax may be beaten down a little, and thus prevented from being blown away.

LIFTING.

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 one stalk in fifty is 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 handbreak, 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. 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 brambles 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 burnt before it is dry, and the rich oily property of the flax is always greatly impaired. On this point the Society can scarcely speak too strongly, as the flax is either destroyed, or rendered not worth one-half of what it would be, if properly dried.

BREAKING AND SCUTCHING,

If done by hand, should be on the Belgian system, which is less wasteful than that practised in Ireland. If by milling, the farmer will do well to select those mills in which the improved machinery has been introduced. The Society would also recommend, that the farmer should endeavour to have his flax scutched by a mill-owner who pays his men *by the day, and not by the stone, even if it should cost him higher in proportion—the system of paying the scutchers by the stone, rendering them more anxious to do a large quantity in the day, than to produce a good yield from the straw.*

THE COURTRAI SYSTEM.

This is the universal mode in the district from which the finest flax we receive is brought. As soon as pulled, the flax is stooked, without binding it. The handfuls are set up, resting against each other, the root ends spread out, and the top ends joining like the letter A, forming stooks about eight feet long, and a short trap keeping the ends firm.