

"Cotton and flax being competitors, flax took the lead in the spinning and weaving districts of England until the days of Hargreaves and Arkwright, when machinery gave the advantage to cotton manufacture. Flax is now advancing again, and its uses are extending." "The cotton world is a little uncertain as to the future supply of raw material: the flax world offers to do what flax cannot, and is even bold enough to challenge cotton for the leading position." "The American States' planters grow as much as the slaves can pick, and there is a limit to the supply from thence." "It is now an unquestionable fact, that the consumptive power treads not only close on the heels of the productive, but has surpassed it." "Lancashire is put to its wits end to devise a mode of escaping from the perilous dependency on the United States for cotton."

Mr. Dodd's words, written eight years before the commencement of the American war, and when there was no prospect of it, were truly prophetic of the results which followed, when it deprived Lancashire of cotton, and threw the manufacture of textile fabrics out of the Manchester cotton-loom into the Irish linen power-loom, causing an increased demand for flax, which is growing greater every year.

Mr. Baker, the British Factory Inspector, in his report of 1861, writes:—"We can neither procure flax from abroad nor induce our farmers to grow the raw material." The same complaint has been made in the United States, in which there are several flax factories, one of which alone consumes in thread and twine about 700 tons annually, or more than one-half of all the flax grown in Upper Canada in 1860. Within the last three years, agents from the United States have come to induce farmers in Canada to sow flax, and they do not hesitate to admit the inferiority of their own growth in quality. Such has been the anxiety of manufacturers for extending its cultivation, that the U. S. Government allocated \$20,000 lately to encourage it; and flax is admitted there, as well as into Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, duty free; in the latter (into which it is imported from Europe) it is used to make twine, thread, fishing-nets, &c. The result of the present civil war must lead to a short supply of cotton from the Southern States for many years to come; and many reasons present themselves to prove that the Southern States are not likely again to supply cotton to the extent they have done heretofore. Cotton, which before the commencement of the war would have sold in England for 6d. or 8d., is now 2s. 4d. per lb., without a prospect of any great decline in price. The necessities of the American Government have

already suggested to them the imposition of a tax upon cotton, which will keep up its price almost to what it now is.

British and Irish manufacturers have been using every exertion throughout the world to obtain supplies of cotton, but the continued high price of it proves, to some extent, their want of success. In like manner it has been sought to procure flax. A company was formed in Belfast, some years ago, which has been endeavouring to cultivate flax in the East Indies; but neither in quantity or quality has it come up to what was expected of it, and the cry of the spinners still is, "Give us more flax." The demand for linens is increasing, new mills are being erected, but the raw material is not forthcoming. A few years ago, power-loom could only weave cotton; but, by improved machinery, they are now applied to the manufacture of linen. King Cotton had a long reign, but it seems that Queen Flax is dethroning him, and may long hold the sway of manufacturing power.

So long as prices are high inferior qualities *may* be purchased; but when the demand lowers they will not be sought after. Superior qualities of raw material always are in request. There is no tradesman who does not understand that a good article is always saleable. So it is with flax. The inferior qualities grown in Ireland sold well during the years of increased demand, up to 1815; but when that demand fell off, they were unable to compete with the superior quality produced in other parts of Europe; nor did the Irish flax growers regain their share of the trade until they altered their system, and produced a better quality.

Canada has now begun to share the flax trade, and she will always continue to hold it, if she only improves the quality of her flax fibre, and extends her fields of cultivation so as to produce a sufficient quantity to attract manufacturers or purchasers from abroad, after supplying her wants at home. Linen, and various other flax manufactures, are now largely imported into the Province, though they might be supplied with advantage and economy either wholly or in part of home grown produce. The home demand for flax would of itself justify the erection of flax scutching mills and preparing factories: the business once established would be permanent and profitable.

It is one of the principles of the far-seeing politicians of the present day to deny the aid of governmental credit, or money, to promote objects which would come into competition with or check private enterprise; but this principle may be carried too far; and there are many projects which it is not only legitimate but expedient for Government to aid by loans or grants from the public