

land into ridges, that it may receive the frost and air; and make surface drains to carry off the rains of Winter. Plough again in Spring, three or four inches deep, so as to preserve the Winter surface for the roots of the flax. The Spring ploughing should be given some time before sowing, to allow any seeds of weeds in the land to vegetate, and the harrowing in of the flax seed will likely kill them, and save a great deal of after weeding. Following the last harrowing it is necessary to roll, to give an even surface and consolidate the land, breaking up this again with a short-toothed or seed harrow, before sowing, which should be up and down, not across the ridges, or anglewise. These operations can be varied by any skilful farmer, to suit peculiar soils or extraordinary seasons. The object is to have clean, fine soil, as like as possible to what a garden soil should be.

Rotation recommended by a gentleman of considerable experience:

#### *Average Soils.*

1. Grass.
2. Oats.
3. Potatoes or Turnips.
4. Wheat.
5. Flax.
6. Clover.

#### *Poor Soils.*

1. Grass.
2. Oats.
3. Potatoes.
4. Flax.
5. Hay.

**SOWING.**—The seed best adapted to the generality of soils is Riga, although Dutch has been used in many districts of county for a series of years with perfect success, and generally produces a finer fibre, but not so heavy a crop as Riga. In buying seed, select it plump, shining, and heavy, and of the best brands, from a respectable merchant. Sift it clear of all the seeds of weeds, which will save a great deal of after trouble, when the crop is growing. This may be done by farmers, and through a wire sieve, twelve bars to the inch. Home-saved seed has produced excellent crops, yet it will be best, in most cases, to use the seed which is saved at home for feeding, or to sell it for the oil mills. The proportion of seed may be stated at one Riga barrel, or three-and-a-half imperial bushels to the Irish or plantation acre; and so on in proportion to the Scotch or Cunningham, and the English or Statute acre. It is better to sow rather too thick than too thin; as, with thick sowing, the stem grows tall and straight, with only one or two seed capsules at the top; and the fibre is found greatly superior, in fineness and length, to that produced from thin-sown flax, which grows coarse and branches out, producing much seed, but a very inferior quality of fibre. The ground being pulverized and well cleaned, roll and sow. If it has been laid off without ridges, it should be marked off in divisions, eight to ten feet broad, in order to give an equable supply of seed. After sowing, which should be done by a very skilful person, as the seed is exceedingly slippery, and apt to glide unevenly from the hand, cover with a seed harrow, going

twice over it—once up and down, and once across or anglewise, as this makes it more equally spread and avoids the small drills made by the teeth of the harrow. Finish with the roller, which will leave the seed covered about an inch—the proper depth. The ridges should be very little raised in the centre, when the ground is ready for the seed, otherwise the crop will not ripen evenly; and when land is properly drained, there should be no ridges. Rolling the ground after sowing is very advisable, care being taken not to roll when the ground is so wet that the earth adheres to the roller.

**WEEDING.**—If care has been paid to cleaning the seed and the soil, few weeds will appear, but if there be any, they must be carefully pulled. It is done in Belgium by women and children, who with coarse cloths round their knees, creep along on all fours. This injures the young plant less than walking over it, (which, if done, should be by persons whose shoes are not filled with nails.) They should work, also, facing the wind, so that the plants laid flat by the pressure, may be blown up again, or they be assisted to regain their upright position. The tender plant, pressed one way, soon recovers, but if twisted or flattened by careless weeding, it seldom rises again. The weeding should be done before the flax reaches six inches in height.

**PULLING.**—The time when flax should be pulled is a point of much nicety to determine. The fibre is in the best state before the seed is quite ripe. If pulled too soon, although the fibre is fine, the great waste in scutching and hackling renders it unprofitable; and if pulled too late, the additional weight does not compensate for the coarseness of the fibre. It may be stated that the best time for pulling is, when the seeds are beginning to change from a green to a pale brown colour, and the stalk to become yellow, for about two-thirds of its height from the ground. When any of the crop is lying on the ground, suffering from wet, it should be pulled as soon as possible, and kept by itself. So long as the ground is undrained, and imperfectly leveled before sowing, the flax will be found of different lengths. In such cases pull each length separately, and if possible, keep it separate in the pool. Where there is much second growth, the flax should be caught by the puller just underneath the bolls, which will leave the short stalks behind. If the latter be few, it is best not to pull them at all, as the loss from mixture and discoloration by weeds would counterbalance the profit. If the ground has been thoroughly drained, and laid out evenly, the flax will likely be all of the same length. It is most essential to take time and care to keep the flax even, by a brush, at the root ends. This increases the value to the spinner, and, of course, to the grower, who will be amply repaid by an additional price for his extra trouble. Let the handfuls of pulled flax be laid across the ground other diagonally, to be ready for the