bundles are laid in a slanting direction in the water, covered with straw or other material, and loaded with pieces of wood and stones to keep them down. The object, as in the case of flax and hemp, is, by a slight degree of fermentation, to enable the epidermis, or outer skin, to separate readily from the bark, and this from the boon or reed. It can easily be ascertained when this object has been effected by taking out one of the stems, holding it by the root end, and drawing the thumb-nail up the stem to the top. If the fibre slip up the stem, it is a proof that it has been sufficiently retted.

The fibres steeped in putrid standing water will be softer than those which are steeped in running water. But in water which does not run they contract a disagreeable color. They are, however, notwithstanding this, easily bleached. It is, nevertheless, desirable to make a small stream of water pass through the steeping place.

When sufficiently retted, the plants are taken carefully out of the water, and set on end to dry, and next day carried to a field of grass that is clean and free from cattle. Here they are spread out very evenly, and turned over with light poles every three or four days. They are sufficiently bleached when spots begin to appear on the stem. When dry, they are tied up in bundles, and taken to the stack or barn.

Breaking by fluted rollers, and scutching, are operations similar to those in the preparation of flax and hemp.

Dew-retting is another method. The stems, after being cut, are allowed to stand in the stooks for two or three days. They are then spread out on grass land for several weeks, and require to be frequently turned. The process is completed when spots begin to appear, as before noticed. They should then be gathered, and tied up in bundles when dry.

Snow-retting may be practised with advantage, as described on a previous page.

CONCLUSION.

The culture of plants claims the first consideration in the economic history of a country, and in the improvement and development of its resources. It is hoped that those fibrous materials which have been treated of in this essay may be made to contribute to our wealth as objects of commerce. We must at first rely upon the efforts of the amateurs and patrons of agriculture, as well as upon those who are best acquainted with all the practical details of the art. Want of immediate success should not be ascribed to unfruitfulness in the soil, or unsuitableness of the climate. We must apply principles to practice, and we will inevitably obtain successful results.