

often costs 14s. per stone to produce, and can be sold at 4s. per stone profit. One point to be particularly noticed is that the cost of scutching per stone is approximately twice what it is in this country, since the men are not paid by the stone as in Ireland, but by the day, and consequently there is no difficulty in getting the flax carefully handled and thoroughly scutched out. Several gentlemen interested in the Irish flax industry have of late years been trying to instil into the minds of the farmers that if their crops of flax are to yield them a profit, they must copy our Continental neighbors, and expend more trouble upon the cultivation, steeping, and scutching of their flax. To this end they have brought over competent Belgian instructors to devote their time to showing the Irish farmer the proper methods. It is to be hoped that their efforts will meet with the success they deserve, and that the acreage under flax in Ireland will show an increase instead of the gradual diminution of the last few years, and that the quality of the fiber brought to market will be equal to that exported from the Continent. Almost every flax-growing district has its special characteristics. In Ireland, Cookstown district is the best, producing a strong, warpy flax. Magherafelt, Randalstown, Lisnaskea, Armagh, and Newry all produce good flax. Monaghan, Coochill, and Ballybay are, as a rule, of medium strength. Strabane and Letterkenny are generally very weak and badly handled. County Down flax is very often of a light color, and a large fibered thread flax. Strabane, Letterkenny, and Ballymoney flax is generally made up in large bundles containing about 3 stone, and sold at so many shillings per cwt. In other markets flax is sold per stone of 14 lbs. Russian flax is regarded by many as the coming flax on account of the very low price at which it can be procured. It is well suited to the production of heavy and medium numbers. We import annually between 50,000 and 70,000 tons of Russian flax, or two-thirds of our total consumption, while the average cost per ton is only about half that of Belgian and Dutch flaxes, and three-fifths that of Irish. The superior marks are possessed of a considerable amount of spinning quality and strength, and if properly "machined" and prepared can be spun into a level thread of good appearance and strength. Riga, on the Baltic sea, is the most important port for the shipment of Russian flax. The sorts which we get from that port are the Crown flaxes, the Hoffs, the Wracks, the Drieband, the Zins, and the Ristens. The marks of the Crown flaxes are K, PK, SPK, HK, HPK, HSPK, GK, GPK, GSPK, WK, WPK, WSPK, ZK, HZK, GZK, R, HR, GR, and WR, the letters meaning respectively K = kron or crown, P = puik or picked, S = sanft or sweet, superior, H, = heel or yellow, G = grau or blay, Z = zins, W = weiss or white, R = Risten. The marks of the Hoffs flaxes are HD, PHD, FPHD, SPHD, SFPHD, WSD, WPHD, WFPHD, WSFPHD. Here H stands for Hoffs, D for

Drieband (tied with three bands), F = fein or fine, and the other letters as in the Crown. The marks of the Wrack flaxes are W, PW, HPW, GPW, WPW. W means Wrack and White, the other letters as in the Crown. The Drieband marks are D, PD, SD, PSD, LD, PLD, and DW. S here means Skanetz, and L, Livonian. Pernau "District" flax is grown in the neighborhood of Pernau, and shipped in the state in which it leaves the peasants, with a good deal of shive left in the top end. Pernau flax is this "District" flax opened out in Pernau and partially re-scutched, making it worth £2 per ton more. The "Braquers," who carry on this trade, select out the different qualities or marks for export. Flax shipped at Pernau comes from either of two districts, Livonia or Fellin, the latter being of a finer quality and fetching £2 per ton more. The Pernau marks are LOD, OD, D, HD, R and G. Other Russian flaxes are Dunabourg, Kowna, Archangel, Pskoff, Ostrow, Reval and Dorpat. For Dunabourg and Kowna the Riga marks are usually employed. For Ostrow the marks of both Riga and Pskoff are used and sometimes figures also. Pskoff flax is usually classed as OD, PW, W, OW, O, OO, OOO, PI, PII, PIII. Archangel flax is usually of a silver blay or a reddish "foxy" color. It is dew-retted. It is only shipped from Archangel, being produced in the interior to the south-west. The "rise" in price for the various marks varies with different years. Take Riga for instance with K as base at £18 per ton. The "rise in pounds per ton for the several marks are H = 1, P = 3, S = 4, G = 3, W = 4, Z = 10. "Stuffing" the flax with tow, or worse, is a dishonest practice of common occurrence among the Russian Jew, in whose hands the Baltic flax trade is to a large extent.

(To be continued).

—The number of sheep in Ontario in June, 1899, was 1,772,604, as compared with 1,677,014 in 1898, and 1,690,350 in 1897; according to the Ontario Bureau of Industries Bulletin, LXX., the wool clip was 5,525,122 pounds in 1899, being an increase of 420,436 pounds over 1898. The falling off in the area under flax is very marked, the acreage in 1899 being 7,103 acres; in 1898, 10,720 acres; in 1897, 16,240 acres.

—Not a great while ago, librarians and book lovers in general were discussing the deterioration in the quality of paper of late years, says the London News. It is curious to learn from Her Majesty's Waste Paper Office that one result of the change of materials has been a decided increase in liability to fire wherever paper waste is accumulated in any great quantity. It is the rarest thing to find paper made of rags now-a-days. It is made from wood and other vegetable materials, which, chemically, are not very different from the component materials of a hayrick. If paper waste is stacked in large masses, and especially if it happens to be a little