ately see the advantage. Those who steep the flax in the Lys itself, collect it in thick bundles nearly a foot in diameter, and somewhat longer than the flax, by laying several small bundles together, as described above. In these large bundles the root projects at each end, and the tops are inside. They are tied round very tight in two places, about six inches from each end. They are then packed upright and closely packed in a cage or frame, made of wood and laths, ten feet square and four deep; boards loaded with stones are placed over the top so as to sink the whole a few inches below the water of the river. Thus the water runs over and under the frame, and is continually changed. The consequence of this is, that the flax becomes of a clear, white colour, without the usual bluish tint and is therefore more valuable. The time of steeping is somewhat longer than in stagnant water. It is pretended by those who do not adopt this method, that there is considerable loss in the weight of flax steeped in this way, which counterbalances the superior value. This is however not clearly proved, and the quantity of flax brought from a great distance to be thus steeped, is a presumptive proof that this method is, on the whole, the most profitable, and the best.

The flax is frequently examined when it is nearly steeped enough. If it be left a few hours too long in the water, the quality is injured; and if it be taken out too soon, the whole fibre will not be detached, but will break in the scutching. As soon as the fibres separate from the woody part, the whole length of the plant, it is immediately taken out of the water, the bundles are untied; and the flax is spread out to dry on a piece of short grass—the place having been previously well swept, that no earth or dirt may be on it. In rainy weather this process is deferred; as rain would now injure the flax materially. It remains on the grass ten or twelve days; and is frequently turned over during that time. It is then housed; and in the course of the winter it is scutched and heckled—operations, which, not necessarily connected with agriculture, need not be described here.

The capsules containing the linseed, which were separated from the stem before they were steeped, are spread on cloths in the sun to thoroughly dry them; after which they are stored in a dry granary until the seed be wanted for crushing or for sowing. The seed which is beaten out in winter is better than that which has been separated from the capsules at first, because it has had time to ripen, and to convert more of its mucilage into oil. The Flemish flax seed, when sown, produces more seed than that from Riga, but the flax is inferior. Hence fresh Riga seed is bought every second year. Next to Courtray, for the growth of good flax, are Roulers, Thielt and Ouchenarde; the Waes district comes next, with Termonde and Alost: that from the neighbourhood of Ghent is inferior.

An acre of good flax, near Courtray is worth from £20 to £25, without reckoning the seed, which is worth £5 or £6 more. Merchants come out of France and Brabant to buy it, as it is pulled and tied in bundles. They have it steeped at their own expense by the regular steepers. In other districts the flax is of less value; in some not above half this sum. When it is considered that wages are not much more than half of what they are in England, it will be seen that the rent and profits of an acre of land fit for the growth of flax, must be considerable; but it must be observed that this golden crop only recurs every nine or ten years and the continual manuring of the land must in part be set off against this crop, which, some how or other, considerably reduces the fertility of the land.

Hemp is not cultivated so extensively as flax, but as it forms a principal produce in the Waes district, where there are some considerable rope and cable manufactories, and is cultivated with some care, it cannot be passed over. The best soil for this plant is a good deep loam, such as it is found in spots in the Waes district, and near Alost. The hemp raised on this soil is long and of a strong texture, and consequently well adapted for cables, cordage and strong canvas for sails. In lighter soils the hemp is sown thicker, and does not attain the same size or strength.

The soil on which hemp is intended to be sown is ploughed in autumn, and again in spring. In the middle of May it is manured with fifteen tons of good rotten dung, which is immediately ploughed in, unless the land had been manured in autumn, which is the better practice, as then the dung is already in a decomposed state at the spring ploughing. In some small farms the hemp-land is trenched and prepared with the spade, and it amply repays the additional expense. In either case the liquid manure is not omitted, especially if *vidanges* can be procured; five tubs of this last, each as much as a horse can draw on the land, are considered as good a dressing as fifteen hogsheads of the common tank liquor, which is chiefly cows' urine. This manure is allowed to sink into the soil for three or four days; the land is then harrowed, and about