

black seeds. The fibre of the leaves, which is both very fine and very strong, was used by the New Zealanders for making dresses, ropes, twine, mats, cloth, etc., before the discovery of New Zealand by Europeans. New Zealand flax thrives best on rich lowlands near rivers and in such places is used in its native country for making twine and ropes. It is also grown to some extent in California, and its cultivation has been attempted in parts of Europe; but the winters, except in the south, are too cold for it. To obtain the fibre the leaves are cut when they have attained their full size and are usually macerated in water for a few days. The New Zealanders formerly procured the fibre in its greatest perfection—very long and slender and shining like silk—by a more laborious process, without maceration. They removed the epidermis from the newly cut leaf, separating the fibres with their thumb nails and then more perfectly by combs. Large manufactories are now constructed, wherein the fibre is stripped by machinery. The best lands yield 10 tons per acre of sun-dried leaves, which produce 1200 pounds of fibre and 80 pounds of tow. See FIBRE.

FLAX, NEW ZEALAND. A valuable fibre, quite different from common flax, obtained from the leaf of a lily-like plant, *Phormium tenax*, sometimes called harakeke. It is a perennial belonging to the family Liliaceæ, a native of New Zealand and Norfolk Island. Its leaves are from 2 to 6 feet long and 2 to 3 inches broad; the flowers brownish yellow; the fruit a three-cornered capsule with numerous compressed jet-