

We do not attempt to give advice to the pioneers, except that they must be equipped with perfect knowledge of both industrial and hand weaving, and of many other things from physics to psychology. Otherwise they are not pioneers at all, and they belong in the second group of those who are different for the heck of it. And anyhow who can advise the pioneers, who are supposed to be the leaders?

FROM THE CLASSICS

"Of the Boiling and Cleansing of Linen Yarn."

by Alexander Peddie, Glasgow, 1822.

Linen yarn before being put into the loom, requires to be boiled for the purpose of softening and emptying the yarn of all impure substances which adhere to the fibers of which the threads are composed, and also to increase its firmness and tenacity; by which operation, the weaver is enabled to put his cloth closer together, and it also retains its closeness after it is weaved, throughout the process of bleaching. A spyndle of yarn, weighing 1 lb 8 oz before it is boiled, will weigh only 1 lb 4 oz after, which is about the sixth part lighter; and if the stuff from which the yarn is spun be of bad quality, it will empty still more; very coarse yarn is seldom boiled, as it would be expensive, but is only put into a steep from twenty-four to forty-eight hours, in order to make it soft, and more flexible for the operation of weaving.

To boil Linen yarn, first steep it among soft water for the space of twenty-four hours, then take it out of the steep, and lay it on a rack to drain off the water from it, and wring it; (and in the interim, have the boiler with a sufficient quantity *) of Pot ashes brought near the boil,) then make it up soft, and put it into the boiler, press it down with a pole, but not hard, as that would cause the yarn to be very unequally boiled; or as it is termed among Boilers "spotted", and when the yarn is new put in, it ought to be particularly attended to, to make the fire burn brisk and strong, which will prevent the spotting in a great measure; make it to boil three hours, (but previous to putting in the yarn have an iron hoop cross warped with cords laid in the bottom of the boiler, to prevent it sitting to the bottom, and burning the yarn;) then take it out, and let it lie till about lukewarm, put it into the boiler again, with a sufficient quantity of Pearl ashes, and boil it for an hour and a half, then take it out and wash the lee out of it in clear running water, then wring it, and let it lie booked in the wrung state, and lastly put it upon poles, shake and dry it, and if the day be dry, the oftener you go over it, the better, as it tends to open the yarn, and make it clear and free.

*) ca 10% of Pot ashes, and later 1% of pearl ashes by weight of yarn. The difference between pot-ash and pearl-ash is that the first is crude and the second purified Potassium Carbonate.
