Hackle. A board with sharpsteel wires over which flax or hemp is combed, to clean, split, and arrange the fibers in parallel order. See Hackle.

Fig. 2477.

The object of hackling is threefold: first, to disentangle and straighten the fibers; secondly, to split the wider ribbons, to lessen them and equalize their size; and, thirdly, to remove the shorter stuff from the longer, the tow from the line.

Huckles are of various grades of fineness, but the finer have shorter and more slender teeth; the grades are known as the ruffer, common 8, fine 8, 10, 12, 18; in allusion to the number of pins in a row. The pins are driven through a tin-covered board, which is clamped to the bench in a backwardly slanting position, as shown in the illustration. The bunch of flax, known as a stick, is thrown upon the hackle and drawn towards the operator, a sloping board at the back preventing its penetrating too far. One end being dressed, the stick is reversed in the hands of the operator, and the other end is heckled.

From 100 pounds of well-cleaned flax, 45 to 50 pounds of heckled line are obtained by hand labor of twelve hours.