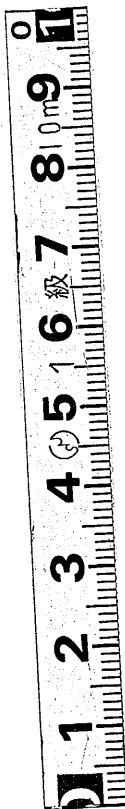


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To the
Right Honorable the Earl of Lauderdale
from Thos. Sheppard
the Chairman of the
Wool & Woollen Trade

ON THE WOOL QUESTION.

THE
WOOL QUESTION

CONSIDERED:

BEING AN

EXAMINATION OF THE REPORT FROM THE SELECT
COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS,

APPOINTED TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION

The State of the British Wool Trade,

AND AN ANSWER TO

EARL STANHOPE'S LETTER

TO THE OWNERS & OCCUPIERS OF SHEEP FARMS.

BY JAMES BISCHOFF.

"For their merchants they are *vena porta*" and if they flourish not, a kingdom may have good limbs but will have empty veins and nourish little.—Taxes and imposts upon them do seldom good to the King's revenue—for that he wins in the Hundred he loseth in the Shire.—*Bacon's Essays.*

LONDON:

J. RICHARDSON, ROYAL EXCHANGE:
AND JOHN BAINES & CO. LEEDS.

1828.

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PREFACE.

AN apology may be thought necessary for the publication of the following observations, after the inquiry which has been given to the **WOOL QUESTION** by a Committee of the House of Lords: this appears the more necessary from one who has now very little personal interest in either the Wool or the Woollen Trade. The only apology which the Author can offer is the connection which he had in the manufacture—the many friends engaged in it—the attention which he has for many years given to the subject—and an anxiety that a Question, which has so frequently agitated both the commercial and manufacturing interests, should, if possible, “be set at rest.” Though the following remarks have been written some time, the publication has been delayed under the hope that the evidence printed by order of the House of Lords would have been conclusive. The Author can scarce expect that

any thing he may say can influence either the Duke of Richmond or the Member for Sussex, in withdrawing the notices they have given for a renewal of the inquiry: if this pamphlet should, in any way, tend to that result, it will be most gratifying, and if it should convince any individual of the injury which would ensue either from a Tax on Wool, or from any further inquiry respecting it, the Author will be amply remunerated.

LONDON, DECEMBER, 1828.

WOOL QUESTION.

The Report of the Committee of the House of Lords comprises a mass of evidence, containing various and important information, but that Committee have expressed no opinion upon the result; they have stated the points to which they have directed their inquiry, but have left it to the House of Lords to determine upon the evidence produced, the information elicited, and what measures should result from their investigation.

It might be a fit subject of inquiry, whether the House of Lords was the proper place where this inquiry ought to have begun: by the constitution of Great Britain, all taxes must originate in the House of Commons, and yet we see an inquiry commence in the Upper House, the declared object of which was *to impose a tax*. It may be said, the inquiry might be made in the Upper, and the tax originate in the Lower House, but it appears most irregular, that a Committee of Inquiry should be appointed, and that the body appointing them should not have the power to enforce what they might recommend. There was, however,

obvious policy in instituting this inquiry in the House of Lords. The object stated was a tax on the importation of Foreign Wool; a tax, the imposition and propriety of which was disavowed by his Majesty's Government, and therefore must have been intended, not for finance, not to supply the necessities of the State, but with the hope of advancing the price of British Wool, or, in fact, of keeping up rents in certain districts.

I will not here discuss the right of Parliament to impose taxes for such purposes, but if that right does exist, it may be carried to an extent fatal to the interests of the country; the tax was proposed for the avowed advantage of one class of his Majesty's subjects, the landed interest, who are represented in Parliament, to the injury of another class of subjects, the manufacturing interest, who, with few exceptions, can only be represented in Parliament by the possession of land.

The House of Lords was certainly best fitted for that purpose, consisting of the largest land proprietors in the kingdom. If the inquiry had taken place in the House of Commons, the Committee would have been much more general, and would have extended the inquiry into other subjects, bearing upon the price of Wool, and the policy of the measure. There are few men in the Upper House of Parliament acquainted with the details of manufactures, and the consequences which any check would have upon the dense population, to which they give employment and support; their large property, their early habits and education, lead the nobility to associate amongst themselves, or with the very highest classes of Commoners, and when they do

mix with the merchant and manufacturer, there is that inequality which puts their intercourse under restraint; and they have not the ordinary means of making themselves practically acquainted with their neighbours. These observations are meant to apply to the general character of the House of Lords: there are exceptions, and this inquiry fully proves it; but the two noblemen, who advocated the interests of the manufacturers, had been long connected with the West-Riding of Yorkshire; they had both represented that county in Parliament; they had devoted the best part of their lives to its service—had become well and thoroughly masters of the subject; they had both contested the same ground in the House of Commons; they had seen the injury arising from Committees of Inquiry, and the effects of a duty on wool, they were aware of its consequences to an immense district, and while the movers of this inquiry were themselves individually interested in the result, looking to it for a continuance or increase of their rentals, the two noblemen on the other side of the question had no interest, except in the prosperity of the country at large. It is not meant to be stated, that their own rent, their own gain, was the sole object of the mover and supporters of this inquiry; though that might give them a bias, they had a more general object—the supposed good of their neighbours—without being aware of the effect which the proposed measures would have upon others. An inquiry in the House of Commons might have produced an impartial report. The House of Lords have virtually given no report, and what has been given to the public cannot be well understood, without some elucidation; it is in fact, only an index; the evidence is printed for the members of both

Houses of Parliament, but it cannot, in its present form be extensively circulated.

It has been the desire of some to abridge the evidence. An objection is obvious. A suspicion would inevitably arise that the abridgement was partial and unfair.

It is to be regretted that any unpleasant feeling should have arisen from this investigation, and it is more particularly to be regretted that any nobleman, either in the House of Lords, or through the medium of the press,* should have made insinuations injurious to the characters of men who did not ask for this inquiry, but were obliged by the measures of those very noblemen to come from a great distance, and at a great inconvenience, to give evidence upon an investigation in which they considered their own interests and those of their neighbours so much involved. The whole report and the whole evidence having been brought before the public, they will best judge how far the observations to which I have alluded are correct; whether there is on the part of the manufacturers the semblance of prevarication, or of a wish and intention to state what they did not think was strictly and literally true. My own opinion is, that whether you look to the evidence of the Agriculturists, or to that of the Manufacturers, (and not being one of either class I may be allowed to say it) it would be most difficult to bring together men more respectable, or better able to give the information required. They in some cases differ in opinion from each other, and such must ever be the case, and in the various questions which have been put to them, there are a few erroneous answers on both sides; it could not be otherwise. A more formidable investi-

* Lord Stanhope's Letter.

gation could not have taken place. The Committee, selected from the House of Lords, consisted of men most conversant with the subject, and, in general, looking to the result with great interest. The questions were not put by one individual of that body, but after the examination in chief had been conducted by one Peer, each and every one of the Committee put such questions, by way of cross-examination, as they thought proper. Would it be possible for men, unaccustomed to such investigations, and unaccustomed also to meet men holding the rank of the investigators, to maintain perfect coolness and collectedness? However anxious to give the truth, and nothing but the truth, they might state at one time an opinion which might by some be thought at variance with what they might have before stated; but this was not prevarication in the common acceptation of that term, which was probably meant by the Noble Duke, who used the offensive term. His Grace made this accusation his "forlorn hope," and, like Hudibras, evaded the question—

"Quoth Hudibras I smell a rat,—

"Ralpho, thou dost prevaricate."

It was right to say so much upon this point, because the charge is again insinuated in the pamphlet to which I have alluded,* and which has been published by Earl Stanhope. It does not become me to give an opinion as to the spirit or tone with which that publication is written, and upon the propriety of a Peer of the realm, and a member of the Committee using such language, and making such attacks upon the characters of private individuals. I shall endeavour, in the course of these observations, to answer his Lordship's arguments

Lord Stanhope's Letter, p. 6.

and to point out his erroneous statements, in a cool and dispassionate manner, and in language becoming a plain humble individual.

This investigation appears to have originated with a very few of the principal and most respectable wool growers in the county of Sussex: their object was to prove a reduction in the price of South Down wool, and that this reduction was caused by the importation of foreign wool, and their application to parliament was, for what they called, a protecting duty on the importation of foreign wool, or a prohibition to importation; this object has been best and most clearly explained by Earl Stanhope; his Lordship says, "the remunerating price of South Down wool being not less than 1s. 6d. per lb. a duty of 6d. per lb. on those descriptions of wool, which might compete with it, is only a duty of 33 per cent. and cannot surely be called *excessive*. It is about the same as is granted upon Foreign silks and upon many other manufactured goods, which are much less important to this country, than the growth of its wool." "If the object could not be obtained by a 6d. duty, I would recommend an absolute prohibition."*

The petition which was presented to parliament by the wool growers of the county of Sussex, and the petition of the Merchants and others resident in London, engaged in the woollen trade, will show the points at issue, and into which the committee was appointed to inquire.

* Earl Stanhope's Letter to the Owners and Occupiers of Sheep Farms. page 32.

To the HONOURABLE the COMMONS of the UNITED KINGDOM of GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND, in Parliament assembled.

The Petition of the undersigned Noble, and the humble Petition of other Owners and Occupiers of Southdown Farms,

SHEWETH,

That, in consequence of the immense import of Foreign Wool, at a mere nominal Duty, Southdown Wool has been, and is now, almost unsaleable at any price; that the loss to the flock-master on the Southdowns, occasioned by this unlimited import of Wool, is not confined merely to the annual difference in the sale of Wool, but extends to their sheep and lambs annually sold to be fattened elsewhere; that the public are not benefitted by this diminution in value, as the price of meat will not be lowered thereby, and thus a most serious annual loss falls on the owners and occupiers of Southdown farms, and none but the growers of Wool abroad receive any benefit; that it has been proved beyond all doubt, by papers laid before Parliament, that not only has our export of Woollen goods not increased since the reduction of the Duty on Wool, in proportion to the increased import of the raw material, but that, on the contrary, while the import of Foreign Wool has been doubled, the export of Woollen goods has considerably decreased; that we have always heard, and believe, that the real wealth of a country consists, in the first place, of the quantity and value of its produce, and secondly, of the industry and spirit of its inhabitants; and that those branches of industry which combine the first production of the raw material with its subsequent preparation, for home consumption and for exportation, ought to be considered as its best, its staple, and we almost say its natural manufacture, and that it is upon this ground that the Woollen business has been for several generations called the staple manufacture and trade of England; that competition is of great use for the improvement of all branches of industry, but when the effect of its injudicious application is to give to one party an advantage against which it is impossible for the other to contend, it defeats its own object and if the party to whom the advantage is given is a Foreign Country, and the sufferer is our own, it appears to us that such an act of legislation is as unwise as it is injurious; that, no more than

fifteen years ago, the growth of fine Wool in the North of Germany was so small as to be hardly known to the rest of Europe, and that within this short period, under the fostering care of a prudent Government, it has increased to such a degree that it is now one of the principal sources of wealth and commerce in those districts where it is encouraged; that, under the protection and example of our late lamented Sovereign, the improvement of our short Wool was carried on with great spirit and success, but that now, by the Act of the Legislature giving an entry to Foreign Wool in such immense quantities, nearly Duty-free, that spirit of improvement is totally destroyed, and the only question now among farmers is, not what may be the fineness, or the value, or the price of Short Wool, but whether it may be possible to get rid of it at any price; that, without any invidious feelings towards the manufacturers, it cannot but occur to our minds, that they have an interest in preferring the purchase of Foreign Wool to British of the same value and price, because, as long as they can supply their wants from abroad they have the British Wool kept for them (like bonded Corn) overloading the barns and outhouses of the farmers, to be called for whenever their convenience or necessity may require it, and this reserve amounts, at the present moment, to the growth of from two to three, and, in many instances, even four years' clip, while the liberty of exportation given to them as a compensation, is a mere illusion, and can afford no relief; that we trust the importance of the subject to your Petitioners will insure to it the earliest attention of your honourable House, and that, if it should be made clear to your honourable House that no other plan of checking the enormous import of Foreign Wool, and thus restoring Southdown Wool to its natural value, can be adopted except the imposing of a Duty on import, that such Duty may be imposed, to take place immediately, and not, as in 1819, to take effect only till after a given period, thereby offering an additional inducement to import, and thus lowering still more the (at present) ruinously low prices of Southdown Wool.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

To the HONOURABLE the COMMONS of the UNITED KINGDOM of GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND, in Parliament assembled.

The Humble Petition of the undersigned Merchants and Others, resident in London, engaged in the Woollen Trade, and in the Exportation of British Woollen Manufactures to Foreign Countries,

SHEWETH,

That your Petitioners have heard with sorrow and alarm, that a Member of your Honourable House has given notice of his intention to move certain Resolutions in your Honourable House, on the subject of the Wool and Woollen Trades, and your Petitioners have heard, and believe, that the object and intention of that Honourable Member is to propose to your Honourable House an increase on the Tax imposed on the Importation of Foreign Wool, expecting from such a measure that the price of Wool grown in the United Kingdom will be advanced.

That your Petitioners are of opinion, that such a Tax would be highly injurious to the interests of themselves and others embarked in the Woollen Trade, and they beg leave respectfully to refer your Honourable House to the proceedings of Parliament, during the few last years, in confirmation of that opinion.

Your Honourable House will find, from returns presented to and by order from your Honourable House, that before the year 1819, the Tax on the Importation of Foreign Wool did not exceed 1d. per lb. and in the four years preceding, viz. the years 1816 to 1819, both inclusive, the average Exportation of Cloth amounted to 542,940 Pieces annually; that in the year 1819 a Tax of 6d. per lb. was imposed on the Importation of Foreign Wool, and that in the four years which followed, viz. in the years 1820 to 1823 inclusive, the Exportation of Cloth amounted to only 389,348 pieces, thereby in that short period reducing that branch of trade 153,592 pieces of Cloth annually, or considerably more than one-fourth of the Exports of that Article.

Your Honourable House, in the year 1823, passed another law, permitting the free transit through this country, of Woollen Cloths and other articles manufactured abroad, and though

your Petitioners admitted the wisdom of that measure, where countries are alike circumstanced in taxation and wages, they petitioned your Honourable House not to pass that law till the tax of 6d. per lb. was reduced on Foreign Wool.

The consequence of that measure was what your Petitioners had anticipated.

The Tax imposed on the Importation of Foreign Wool had thrown upon the hands of farmers abroad, a quality and description of Wool which had before found a market in this country, and the Tax encouraged and fostered, and in some districts formed, new manufacturing Establishments abroad, the competition of which was severely felt by your Petitioners in the markets, not only of Europe, but distant parts of the globe, which formerly got their principal supplies of Woollens from England. Cloths of Foreign fabric were sent to the bonded warehouses in London upon an extensive and rapidly-increasing scale and sold at lower prices than Cloth of the same quality could be manufactured here.

Your Honourable House seeing the consequence of this measure, and looking to the great distress which thereby had resulted in the districts of this country employed in the Woollen Trade, did, the following year, viz. 1824, reduce the Tax on Wool from 6d. to 1d. per lb.; and though your Petitioners believed that a most severe check had been given to the Woollen Manufacturers by the Tax on Wool, they hoped and expected that by the reduction of that Tax they would gradually get back the trade which had left this country.

The consequences are beginning to show that their expectations are likely to be accomplished, and they feel assured the Exportation of Cloth will continue to increase, and the Woollen Trade further prosper, if not incumbered with any additional Tax, though suffering severely from the pressure of the Corn Laws, and the consequent high price of food, as compared with Foreign Countries.

Your Petitioners could equally show that the price of English Wool (as they anticipated) was not improved by the additional Tax on Foreign Wool, but, on the contrary, declined.

Your Petitioners believe that the price of English Wool

will not be improved by the proposed Tax upon Foreign Wool, but only by the prosperous state of the Woollen Manufacture, and a consequent demand for Wool.

Your Petitioners believe that during the four years preceding the Tax, viz. 1816 to 1819 inclusive, the price of South Down Wool was 20d. per lb. and in the following years, during the Tax, viz. 1820 to 1823 inclusive, the price was 15d per lb. Your Petitioners admit that the price of South Down Wool is now considerably lower, yet they do not attribute that depreciation to the reduction of the Tax on Wool, but to the deterioration in quality, and to circumstances well known to the Members of your Honourable House, which have equally reduced the price of various raw materials, as Cotton, Flax, Silk, and indeed every article of produce and merchandise, with the exception of Corn and other descriptions of food, in this country, which, unlike Wool, find their total consumption at home, and do not depend upon Foreign demand for the sale and price, and of which the Land Owners of the United Kingdom possess the entire monopoly.

Your Petitioners also beg leave humbly to represent that an increased duty on the Importation of the raw material used in manufacture will be totally at variance with, and in opposition to the liberal system so lately, and, as your Petitioners believe, so beneficially introduced into the commerce of the United Kingdom.

Your Petitioners having endeavoured to state the case in a clear and precise manner, humbly and earnestly, but most respectfully, pray your Honourable House that your Honourable House will not consent to any increase on the Tax on Foreign Wool, and will not appoint a Committee of your Honourable House to inquire into the subject, (which would cause great confusion and alarm in the manufacturing districts,) but that your Honourable House will allow the Laws, as respects Wool and Woollens, to remain as they are. And your Petitioners hope and believe, that under those Laws your Honourable House will see the Trade increase and prosper, and with its prosperity the price of English Wool maintained and improved.

And your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

Upon these two statements, and the evidence produced upon them, the report of the committee ought to have been made, and it would have set the question at rest. The report comprising no results, parliament and the country must judge from the evidence itself, and in the following observations, I have taken the different heads, sixteen in number, into which the Committee of the House of Lords have divided the subject, enlarging upon each.

The following are the different heads to which the Committee directed their inquiry :—

1. The past and present state of the Growers of Short or Clothing Wools, of Long or Combing Wools, and of British Merino Wool.
2. The probability of any change in that state; the stock of British Wool now in the hands of the growers, the staplers, and the manufacturers, and a comparison between the stock in hand now and at former periods.
3. The depression in the price of wool and the various causes from which it is alleged to proceed.
4. The past and present state of Agriculture in light and upland soils, as dependent upon the folding system, and the use of particular breeds of sheep.
5. The change which is alledged to have taken place in the weight of the carcase of the sheep, in the quality of the fleece, and in its usefulness for the purposes of manufacture.
6. The various uses of Long and Short Wool.
7. The application of Short Wools to the purpose of combing.
8. The export and import of woollen cloths.
9. The effect of duties in this and in Foreign countries on wool and on woollen manufacturers.
10. The proportion between the home and the foreign markets for woollen manufactures.
11. The change which has taken place in the demand for the finer articles of manufacture.
12. The past and present value of cloths manufactured solely from British wool, without any mixture of British wool, with the fine wools of Germany and Spain, with the low wools of the Mediterranean, Germany, Denmark, Russia and Iceland, and with the wools of Australia.

13. The value made wholly from Foreign wool.
14. The effect of the manufacture of articles made of Cotton, and of Wool mixed with Cotton, upon the Wool Market, and upon the Woollen Trade.
15. The importation of Woollen Rags, and the uses to which they are applied.
16. The probable increase of wool from Australia.

1. *The past and present state of the Growers of Short or Clothing Wools, of Long or Combing Wools, and of British Merino Wool.*

This first head, to which the committee has drawn the attention of the House of Lords, would, if properly followed, have opened a wide field for inquiry, it would have embraced the following points:—

The past and present state of the cultivation of different districts.

The past and present proportion of arable and pasture land.

The past and present rate of rents.

In order to come to fair and just conclusions upon these heads, the inquiry should not have been confined to a comparison commencing with a state of war and ending with a state of peace, but they should have commenced with peace, have carried on their inquiry during war, and on the return of peace, and have concluded by a comparison of the different results at each period.

The districts which the growers of British short wool occupy, are chiefly the light and hilly parts of Sussex, Wilts, Essex, Suffolk and other southern counties of

England, and the Highlands of Scotland. The result of an inquiry from peace to war, and war to peace, might have shown that a great proportion of those counties had ever been downs and sheep pastures, but that in consequence of the high price of corn during the French war they had been converted into arable land, and the plough was carried to places, which, both from the nature of their soil and their situation, could not be advantageously adapted to the growth of corn, except at very high prices; the evidence elicited by the committee shows this to some extent; Mr. Ellman says, “I consider, that if we are not paid a better price for our wool, than we are at present, the farmers, generally, on the South Downs, as well as all other hill districts, of light soil, would diminish the number of sheep they keep on the land, and consequently diminish the number of acres in cultivation.”* That “he does not think he keeps more sheep than are necessary for sustaining the arable part of his farm.”† That “he thinks the ploughing up of the Downs may be overdone.”‡ “The very high prices of grain in the whole of the years 1810 and 1811 were a great inducement to farmers to plough up every acre of pasture they could.”§

If, therefore, this point be established, if farmers have now land under cultivation which could be so maintained solely by war prices, and while it altered the character of the country and the food of the sheep, depriving them of the fine herbage of the Downs, and giving them turnips and other green crops with the weeds and thistles, which are in corn stubble, thereby deteriorating their wool, which will be another subject of inquiry; they are now bearing the

* Report, page 65. † 65. ‡ 66. § 66.

consequences of their own former excitement and speculation, and it might be best that those lands should be thrown out of cultivation, and again become sheep pastures. If the committee had asked the Sussex farmers the relative proportion of their arable land now, and in the year 1790, this point might have been cleared up, and with it reasons given for the distress which is alleged to exist amongst the growers of short or clothing wool. The inquiry would have also materially brought forwards the relative rate with respect to rentals, the price of land in peace, in war, and again in peace; and if it was ascertained that the landlord had raised his rent by allowing the tenant to plough up the Downs, which could only be maintained in cultivation by war prices, he too is only feeling the effects of excitement and speculation, and must reduce his rent to the rate of the price which production ought to bear in peace.

There can be no doubt, the fact is admitted by all, and let me add, lamented by all—that the price of short wool is very low; but if, by giving the sheep different food, they have increased the weight of the carcase, and also the weight of the fleece, it may appear that the farmer now gets more per sheep per acre, taking the carcase and the wool together, than he used to do; but from their very expensive efforts to keep land under the plough, which never ought to have had a plough upon it, the land has been so changed from sheep pastures to arable, that the price of corn materially bears upon this question; to use a familiar phrase, “what they lose in meal they gain in malt.” The table prepared by order of the committee, and printed in their report, shows the average price of Wheat, Barley, and Oats, and the following are the highest, and lowest annual average prices;—

| | WHEAT. | BARLEY. | OATS. |
|------------------|------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1788 per Quarter | 47s. 8d. | 1789 21s. 10d. | 1789 18s. 9d. |
| 1812 | 145s. 10d. | 1800 71s. 7d. | 1812 57s. 6d. |

Does not this account for the altered state of cultivation, and give some idea of the rate of rents?

The next class in order are the growers of Long Wool, but these have not much cause to complain of price; and the small reduction has arisen, as will appear in the sequel, from the improvements in machinery, by which wool of shorter staple can be made into worsted. It will also appear that with the exception of wool from Ireland, none has been imported to interfere with the long wools of England

The growers of Merino Wool have been affected in a similar manner to the growers of the other short clothing wools.

Another head which would have been a fit subject for inquiry, would have been the rents paid during peace during war, and on the return of peace.

The evidence of Mr. Ellman, jun. says, that in 1817 he paid £900 per annum rent, and he now pays £700 per annum,* but he does not say what he paid before the year 1817 and in 1790. Mr. Richard Healy merely says, he entered upon his farm in Leicestershire in 1807 at a certain rental, and in the year 1813 that rental was very materially advanced.†

It is possible they might have entered upon their farms since the year 1790, and could not know the rentals paid by their predecessors, but this doubt might without any difficulty have been cleared up by Earl Stanhope; he

* Report, page 20.

† 45.

could easily have ascertained what his estates produced in 1793; but his Lordship makes no allusion to this; he mentions every instance of the reduction, but not one single instance of the advance from 1790.

2. *The probability of any change in that state; the stock of British Wool now in the hands of the growers, the staplers, and the manufacturers, and a comparison between the stock in hand now and at former periods.*

The evidence contained in the Lords' Report, shows, that the stock of long wool is not larger than the ordinary demands of the manufacturers require, but that the stock of short clothing wool may be estimated at about two years growth, that it is almost altogether in the hands of the farmer, who, having been averse to submit to a reduction of price, has allowed his stock to increase; it appears, however, that the consumption is increasing.

Nothing can be so doubtful as an opinion with regard to the stock of wool: it is chiefly in the hands of the farmers, and looking to the large surface which it covers, it is difficult to ascertain its quantity; the inference however, which naturally arises from the subject is, that where the stock of wool is large, the farmers have been successful and have the means of holding it; Lord Stanhope says, "it is proved beyond the possibility of doubt, that in many cases the farmers have three years stock on hand, some even that of four years, that some of them have sold their wool, because they had no room to warehouse it, that there is very little demand for wool and

"a very great difficulty in selling." His Lordship does not in his letter to the owners and occupiers of sheep farms, allude even to the evidence on the other side, which proves as clearly that the stock of wool is reduced, and is still reducing, nor does his Lordship intimate, that any farmers have sold their wool from distress or the want of money. The farmers of Sussex are, generally speaking, men of property, many live upon their own estates, they have not only the means of holding their wool, but, contrary to the custom of every other trade and to their own custom with respect to corn, if the buyer of wool does not go to them, they do not trouble themselves by going to the buyer; the farmer in Sussex may therefore have an accumulation, and may say truly, that he has three or even five years' stock on hand, whilst those acquainted with other counties, where the farmer exerts himself to sell his wool, may state with equal truth that there is little stock on hand.

Still, however, it has not been unusual to have an accumulation of English Wool, of two or even five years, arising from checks to demand for manufactures; such was the case during the American war, but it appears from this investigation, that the nature of the British wool trade is very materially changed; the woolstaplers do not hold the large stocks of wool which they formerly did, and their number is materially reduced; this may have arisen from the custom which the manufacturers have adopted, of purchasing their wool direct from the farmer, and thereby saving the profit of the middle man; it is evident that the stocks are now chiefly in the hands of the farmers and manufacturers.

3. *The depression in the price of wool and the various causes from which it is alleged to proceed.*

If the present price of short clothing wool be compared with what it was twenty years ago, the depression is established; but looking to the tables of prices, produced by Mr. Thomas Legg,* whose evidence was brought forwards by the landed interest, and of Mr. W. Nottidge,† whose evidence was brought forward by the manufacturing interests, and also looking to the relative prices of South Down Wool, with every other raw material used in manufactures,‡ the depression which has taken place is not greater than might have been expected, and the causes are evident from the altered taste of this as well as other countries, with respect to the softness and texture of their woollen cloths, (which subject will be enlarged upon when speaking of the 12th division made by the Committee) from the reduced demand for the army and navy, and from the more general use of cotton manufactures.

The Committee of the House of Lords have also on this head not gone back far enough in their inquiry as to the causes of the extremely high prices of wool during the war, and its fall in price when these causes ceased; and in order more clearly to understand the subject, it may be desirable to give a brief history of those trades, which chiefly consume the South Down and other English clothing wools.

Anterior to the French Revolution, the markets of Russia, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and the Levant, were almost entirely supplied with coarse woollens from

* Report page 102

† 276.

‡ 499 to 504.

this country, the price of these goods seldom exceeding 5s. per yard. Many ships were annually despatched from Hull for the Mediterranean, laden altogether with Yorkshire woollens.

The French Revolution commenced in 1789.

War was declared against France in 1793.

In the period of time, between the Revolution and the declaration of war, the manufactures of France were suspended, and their armies were clothed from this country; shipments were made as fast as cloth could be manufactured, and, upon reference to the tables of the price of wool, it appears that South Down Wool, in 1791, was 11½d. per lb., and, in 1792, it rose to 16d. per lb.

A stop was put to that trade by the war, and the price of wool again fell, in 1793, to 11½d. per lb., the exportation of woollen manufactures being,

In 1792, £5,510,668,

In 1793, £3,806,536.

Then, however, commenced the demand for clothing for our own army, and our allies; our trade with other markets on the Continent remained open, and the price of wool gradually advanced.

Upon the invasion of Italy, in 1796, it again gave way.

The Supplementary Militia and Volunteers were embodied in 1798-9, and the price of wool rose, in consequence of increased demand for army cloths, to 21d. per pound.

The peace of Amiens took place in 1802.

War was renewed by England, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, in 1805.

In addition to the British troops, the Russians were clothed from England; wool rose to 2s. 3d. per lb.

Spain was invaded by the French in 1808: Joseph Bonaparte was placed on the throne, and, under the expectation that no wool could come from Spain, (the importation from Germany being then very trifling,) large speculations were on foot; Spanish Wool rose nominally to 20s. per lb., and South Down Wool to 3s. per lb.: that price did not, however, continue long; it fell, in 1810, to 2s. 4d., and in 1811 to 1s. 5d.

The destruction of the French army in Russia, and the rapid and splendid victories of the Duke of Wellington in Portugal and Spain, in 1812, again opened the continental markets, the advance in wool was to 2s. 2d. per lb.

The treaty of Vienna was signed in 1815, and, when prohibitory duties did not prevent it, our trade improved with the Continent, whilst that of the United States also increased.

This demand continued to 1818, when the price of wool had attained to 2s. 6d. per lb.

The tax of 6d. per lb. was imposed on Foreign Wool in 1819; the exports of cloth fell off materially, as will be seen in treating upon the exports and imports of woollens. The price of English wool fell to 1s. 7d. per lb. and it continued to fall gradually till 1822, when it was 1s. 3d. per lb.

The price of wool improved again in 1823, from shipments to South America, in consequence of the loans which were negotiated here; the speculators of the Stock Exchange being the paymasters.

When that unnatural demand ceased, the price fell, and continued to fall till 1824, when our exportation of woollens had so much decreased, and the price of wool had fallen so much, that it was found necessary to reduce the tax to one penny per lb.

Having gone through this brief history of the fluctuations which have taken place in the price of wool since the commencement of the French Revolution, the result, I think, will satisfy every unprejudiced mind, that the production of coarse wool, in Great Britain, far exceeds its internal consumption in time of peace, and even in war, when the demand is so much increased for the army and navy; these causes will not be sufficient, without foreign trade, to keep up the price; it will, therefore, be apparent, that whatever tends to decrease foreign demand must injure the English wool grower, and whatever tends to increase that demand will be advantageous to him: the tax on the importation of Foreign Wool operated in two ways; it not only checked the trade in woollens with every foreign country, but it was a bounty to the foreign manufacturer, the rival of the British, and it gave offence and disgust. It was stated in the House of Representatives of the United States of America, that they were willing to pay the English for labour, but would not pay their taxes. From that period, at which the duties on the importation of British manufactures were increased, they began to manufacture for themselves; the first importation of Spanish Wool into Massachussets Bay was in 1820, the year subsequent to the imposition of the Wool tax, and their woollen manufactures have gradually increased, and become an extensive trade.

In Spain, too, which used to be a great market for the coarse woollens of England, particularly baizes and flannels, they prohibited the importation of British woollens in the same year that the Wool Tax was imposed, under the pretext that, by the heavy duty on the importation of wool imported from thence, we were injuring their trade. The immediate effect of the tax was, therefore, to check

foreign demand for British Wool, in its manufactured state. Few woollen goods were exported to Spain containing any of their own wool. The importation from thence was a raw material suitable to the taste, the comfort, and luxury of this and other opulent countries. The exportation was a manufactured article, containing a raw material, which did not, and does not, suit the taste and demand of opulent countries.

A trade must be good which imports a raw material, and returns that raw material in its manufactured state, the foreigners paying for the labour of making it, but a trade is still more advantageous that imports a raw material, which, manufactured, is suitable to our taste, and exports an article made from a raw material which is not consumed in the country where it is produced.

There is another effect produced by the tax which was alike injurious to the English Wool Grower and to the Manufacturer; it glutted the foreigner with his coarse wool, and made it unsaleable, except at a most reduced price, thereby raising up rival manufactures, and encouraging those which were established.

Mr. Ellman, in his explanatory evidence, having been requested, on the 17th May, to explain some parts of his evidence given on the 15th May, says, "I conceived the question (put on the 15th of May) to be, whether I could explain the difference between the price that wool was selling at when the duty took place, and since the duty has been taken off. I will assign my reasons why the price was lower during the time the duty was imposed, than it was previously to the duty taking place. There was an application made to parliament, in the year 1818, which was one year previous to the duty taking place, whether that had any effect

"on the importers of Foreign Wool I cannot undertake to say, but I am rather led to believe it had. It was known as early as the month of May, 1819, that a duty would take place of *threepence per lb.* on the 10th of September following, and the other *threepence* a pound not to take place *till December*. In consequence of the duty being so long delayed, and the importers having a knowledge that there would be a duty on the import after September, there was an immense quantity of wool brought in that year, as well as the previous year, which overstocked the market, a very considerable portion was brought to the hammer for sale, the manufacturers could not take it, that depressed the price for the three following years; there is no other reason that I am aware of."*

This explanation, made by Mr. Ellman at his own request, requires particular attention, both from its incorrectness, and from the manner in which it was made, after mature and deliberate consideration. It was intended to convey the impression, that the price of English Wool was depressed, solely from the importation of Foreign. In order to explain the real cause, and to show the erroneous opinion of Mr. Ellman, I state the import of wool and export of cloth in the years ending 5th January, 1816 to 1821, and consequently the year which is officially called 1816 was in fact 1815, that of 1817 was in fact 1816, and so on:—

| <i>Importation of Wool.</i> | | <i>Exportation of Cloth.</i> | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|--|
| †1816, | 7,517,886 lb. | 638,368 pieces. | |
| 1817, | 14,061,722 lb. | 467,221 pieces. | |
| 1818, | 24,749,570 lb. | 478,378 pieces. | |
| 1819, | 16,100,973 lb. | 446,872 pieces. | |
| 1820, | 9,789,020 lb. | 340,044 pieces. | |
| 1821, | 16,632,028 lb. | 288,228 pieces. | |

* Report, page 95.

† Appendix to Report.

The tax of sixpence per lb. on Foreign Wool was laid 10th October, 1819.

Is it possible to look to that statement and not see that the price of British Wool must be depressed quite as much by the reduced exportation of cloth, as by the increased importation of wool? If the increased importation had the effect which Mr. Ellman has stated, reducing the price of the raw material, it would have increased the foreign demand for cloth, provided no other circumstances operated upon it; but the real fact was, as has been before stated, that the tax glutted the continental market with low foreign wools, enabled the foreign manufacturer, at reduced prices, to supply foreign markets with cloth, thereby checking the demand for British goods.

But this voluntary explanation, given by Mr. Ellman, requires observations upon another point. The increased importation of wool, in 1818, probably arose from the very short importation of 1816 and 1817; this is accounted for in a natural way, and the fruitless application to Parliament for a protecting duty, in 1818, could have no effect. The other reason given by Mr. Ellman is, the time which elapsed between the vote of the House of Commons and the period at which the tax came into operation; and this requires a few remarks.

Mr. Ellman states, that it was known in the month of *May*, 1819, that a duty would take place of 3d. per lb. on the 10th of *September* following, and the other 3d. not to take place till the 10th of *December*. The Bill originally brought into the House of Commons, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, (now Lord Bexley,) was, that a tax of 6d. per lb. should be laid on all wool imported from foreign countries, *after the passing of the act*; and also a duty on wools imported from *British*

Possessions; viz. 3d. per lb. to commence on the 5th January, 1823, and 6d. per lb. on the 5th January, 1826; the division of the tax referred to by Mr. Ellman, did not apply to *Foreign* but to *British Wool*. The landed interest, looking solely to what they thought their own advantage, did not even spare their fellow subjects in our infant colonies. The Chancellor of the Exchequer also moved for leave to bring in the Bill on the 14th June, 1819, and so secretly had the arrangement been made, that the manufacturers and wool importers were taken by surprise. The Bill was hurried into Parliament so rapidly, that only three petitions, one from London, could, by the form of the House be presented, which refuses petitions against taxes after the Bill for imposing those taxes is brought in.

The manufacturers and wool importers, finding that it was impossible to meet the question by petition, (the most constitutional mode of doing it,) represented to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that they had wools, *then upon the sea?* and also wool already purchased in *Spain, Germany, the Shores of the Mediterranean, and South America*, part of which was of so low a quality that it could only be sold even at 6d. per lb., and consequently they must, upon the arrival of the ships in the Thames, either throw that wool overboard, or endeavour to find some other market for it. His Majesty's Government, seeing the equity of this claim, agreed that the duty in contemplation, of 6d. per lb., should take place on the 10th September, on all wools imported from Europe, north of the Mediterranean, and on the 10th December on wool imported from the Mediterranean, and from other parts of the world. There can only be one opinion as to the injustice of the intention of the agriculturists; blind

to every thing except what they thought their own interest, they were endeavouring to obtain a tax ruinous to the wool importers, without giving them a chance of escape from its effects.

That the importation of wool was large, in consequence of the time allowed between the granting of the tax and its operation, there can be no doubt; but though large, it is by no means clear that the price of English Wool fell from that cause; the more natural supposition is, that it fell from the exorbitant demands of the British wool growers, for it appears, from their own tables, that in the very year in which this unjust tax was pressed by them upon Government, South Down Wool was sold at 2s. 6d. and 3s. per lb., double what they now all agree would be a remunerating price; and the first intimation of the intention of imposing this tax made to the manufacturers, was by a note from a Noble Lord (now dead) to his wool broker in the city, stating that Ministers had at length yielded to the solicitation of the wool growers; that a tax of 6d. per lb. would be laid on Foreign Wool; the price of English Wool would therefore advance 6d. per lb., and ordering him not to take less than 3s. 6d. per lb. for his South Down Wool!!!

The low price of South Down Wool is accounted for and that most naturally and clearly,—it had been raised to a most unnatural and unprecedented height.

As applied to agriculture, to commerce, and even to the pursuits of taste and literature, there are periods in which the feelings and the passions get the better of the judgment; such was the case with commerce in 1825, when every investment was speculation, when the steady merchant and the plodding tradesman were converted into wild speculators; such was the mania for old black letter

books, which became the more valuable because the leaves had never been cut open, and such has been the state of the agricultural interest also. There was a great deal of quackery in all these things, interested men puffed off their merchandise, their visionary schemes, their old books, and their breeds of sheep; they acted upon the same principle, had the same object, and obtained the same temporary success. Mr. Ellman's wool was esteemed the best South Down; Mr. Boys says, he and his father paid Mr. Ellman upwards of £3000 for the use of rams and the purchase of ewes to improve the wool as much as possible; this artificial price of wool happening at the restoration of general peace, the British wool growers had to meet the Foreign wool growers in foreign markets; the British manufacturer must either purchase English wool lower, go to the foreigner for his raw material, or stop his works; it must fall the more in proportion to its exorbitant height, and to the obstinacy of the holders. This was one cause; another has been the deterioration of South Down Wool, of which more will appear hereafter, another (which operated upon all articles of merchandise,) has been the return from war to peace and the alteration in the currency, distressing in its effects, but necessary for the country. There is no other raw material which has not fallen in a similar ratio, and the Committee of the Lords have, by giving the average prices of various articles from 1782 to 1828, fully established that point. These are taken from price currents, in which the price of English wool was not reported, but by giving the tables of Mr. Legg* and Mr. Nottidge,† the reference is most easy, and the fact clear.

* Report, page 276.

† Page 499 to 504.

The English farmer has not near so much reason to complain even of the price of his wool as the owners of mines, the importers of coffee, cotton, silk, &c. have to complain of the reduced prices of their respective stocks of merchandise, and instead of going to Parliament, with complaints and demands for what he calls protection, the farmer would have been better employed, if thereby he did not injure the more profitable part of his sheep, the carcase, in adapting his growth to the demands of the country; not by following the example of the waggoner, and applying to Jupiter for aid, but by following the advice of Jupiter, putting his shoulder to the wheel and meeting his difficulties with manly firmness. I cannot conclude this article, without alluding to Earl Stanhope's Letter. His Lordship states the remunerating price of South Down Wool at 1s. 6d. per lb.; this is the opinion of the growers, but is their *ipse dixit* to be considered the truth? there must be two opinions upon that subject; upon this however I shall not dwell, but shall go to another remark of His Lordship's connected with the price of wool; his observation is as follows:—"The fall in the price of South Down Wool and of Cheviot Wool since the year 1819, is at least 50 per cent. In the same period Merino Wool has fallen from 2s. 3d. to 1s. 9d. per lb. and Long Wool from 1s. 5½d. to 11½d. being a fall of 22 per cent. in Merino, and of above 35 per cent. in Long Wool.

"Notwithstanding these facts, which, according to a common proverb, are stubborn things, Mr. Gott, a merchant and manufacturer states, that wool partakes only of the general fall applying to all other articles in the same or less ratio. It would indeed be a very

"agreeable surprise, to his customers, if they found that cloths had since 1819 fallen 50 or even 35 or 22 per cent. but they all know, that such is the case with respect to wool only and not to other articles either of produce or manufacture."*

How Earl Stanhope could have made this bold assertion, having before him the tables of prices of various articles stated in Prince's price current and prepared by Mr. E. C. Hohler,† by order of that Committee of which His Lordship was a member, it is for his Lordship to explain; but in order to ascertain the truth of His Lordship's statement, I insert from their own tables the following prices of a few Foreign articles in 1819 and 1828:—

| YEAR. | 1819. | | 1820. | | 1821. | | 1822. | | 1823. | | 1824. | | 1825. | | 1826. | | 1827. | | 1828. | |
|--------------------|-------|----|-------|----|-------|-----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|----|
| | s. | d. | s. | d. | s. | d. | s. | d. | s. | d. | s. | d. | s. | d. | s. | d. | s. | d. | s. | d. |
| Coffee | 140 | 9 | 141 | 8 | 263 | 0 | 328 | 4 | 169 | 6 | 111 | 2 | 155 | 2 | 118 | 10 | 110 | 5 | 107 | 8 |
| Cotton | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0½ | 0 | 10½ | 0 | 9½ | 0 | 9½ | 0 | 9½ | 1 | 0½ | 0 | 8 | 0 | 7½ | 0 | 6½ |
| Silk | 59 | 11 | 44 | 2 | 45 | 9 | 49 | 10 | 46 | 1 | 37 | 5 | 42 | 0 | 36 | 6 | 33 | 5 | 40 | 0 |
| Foreign Wool | 5 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 4 | 11 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 9½ | 3 | 6 | 3 | 6 |
| South Down Wool | 1 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3½ | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 9 |

It appears that none have fallen less than 22 per cent. and Cotton has fallen in price more than South Down Wool.

If his Lordship too had investigated the evidence with respect to the price of cloth, with the same attention that he had given to the price of wool, he would have found that the very fact, the fall in the price of cloth, has taken place in the same proportion. Mr. Varley said, in answer to a question,‡ "Is the yard of cloth of the quality, that now sells for 5s. for the export trade, cheaper than it was three years ago?"

Answer—"Yes it is cheaper by one-third almost, I think I am right, it will be one-third."

* Lord Stanhope's Letter, page 3. † Report, page 499.

‡ Report, page 283.

If a similar question had been put to Mr. Gott, or any other manufacturer or merchant who was examined, a similar answer would have been given, and this fall in the price of cloth, is in almost the same ratio as the fall in the price of wool, notwithstanding that labour constitutes about one-half the price of cloth, and that the price of labour is maintained by *the monopoly of corn*, which is given to the landed interest, *the profit therefore to the master manufacturer is considerably less than it was in 1819*. It must indeed be in the recollection of Earl Stanhope, and of every Member of the Committee, what astonishment was expressed by their Lordships at the low price of the different samples of Cloth for inspection.

4. *The past and present state of Agriculture in light and upland soils, as dependent upon the folding system, and the use of particular breeds of sheep.*

The alteration which has taken place in agriculture, in the Downs, and hilly districts, having by the change of food altered the quality of wool, became a point of inquiry under the last head. It appears established by the evidence, that the folding system is necessary, if light and upland soils are to continue arable, and that the South Down sheep are best adapted to that system of agriculture. If, however, I was to follow the different arguments which occur to me under this head, I should bring forwards other considerations which have been carefully kept out of sight in this inquiry, before the House of Lords, but which bear most materially upon the question in discussion; it is not my intention, however, to go at length into the policy of the Corn Laws, that subject has

been so discussed both in and out of parliament, it is one in which feeling, prejudice, and interest are so mixed up, that it is difficult to come to a clear and satisfactory conclusion; I shall therefore content myself by repeating, that the light and upland districts of Sussex, Kent, Wilts, &c. were, before the war, almost entirely sheep pastures, that from the high price of corn, during war, it became the immediate interest of the farmer to carry his plough upon lands where it ought not to have been seen; he sacrificed the future to the present, destroyed his pastures for fine wool sheep, and having become rich by his corn, he then applies to the legislature for what he calls protection to agriculture, but what would more properly be called protection for agricultural speculation. If the lands so converted from sheep pastures to arable, and now cultivated at an enormous expense were left out of the question, and the import price of corn calculated upon the production of better land, the protecting duty (if necessary at all) might be much reduced, the South Down wool might again become finer, and the demand for it might increase, the price of Corn would advance abroad, and with the advance of food there so would be the advantages to the British manufacturer; the lands of Germany would again be converted from sheep pastures to corn land. The effect of open competition in the wool market will be seen in the sequel. A tax of 6d. per lb. on the importation of Foreign wool into England threw British capital out of that trade, it left an article on the hands of the Foreign wool growers, which was manufactured to compete with the English, and with the depreciation of Foreign wool, a similar depreciation took place in English wool, the wool tax was repealed, British capital was again employed in it, and the price of Foreign wool again advanced. Let this be applied to corn.

Corn is low in Prussia, because by the laws of this country British capital is prevented from being actively employed in the corn trade; the low rate of wages therefore enables the Prussian manufacturer to meet the British manufacturer in open markets. Allow British capital again to be employed in corn whenever and wherever it is cheap, and it is reasonable to infer that similar effects will be produced as were produced in the wool trade; the price of corn might advance in Prussia, and scope be given to our manufacturers in every branch, who by increasing prosperity would increase the consumption of the produce of the soil. I conceive that the Corn Laws are a part and parcel of this question, and increased liberality with respect to them would be advantageous, not only by improving the quality of British wool, but by improving the demand for it; it is however proved by evidence given before the Committee, that if the light and upland soils are to be kept in cultivation, the folding system is necessary, for manure cannot be conveyed to them by carts, they depend entirely upon sheep for it.

Nor do I mean to say, that it would be wise to allow the *free* importation of Foreign corn; but, under the present system of Corn duties, there is no encouragement for the British merchant to make purchases, when it is low in England and low abroad. If a regular and steady duty were fixed upon the importation of corn, as is fixed upon every other article, the public revenue would be greatly increased, and I conceive the landed proprietors would not be injured, but that they and every other class of the community would be benefited by it, not by the reduced price of corn in England, but by increased price of corn, and increased rate of wages on the Continent. Provided the relative price of corn here and there is alike, or nearly alike, it is of little consequence

what the price is, the British manufacturer is not injured by the high prices of corn alone, but by the low price, which his rival manufacturer in Prussia pays; and the nearer the wages of Prussia are made to approximate to the wages of England, the better it will be for England.

5. *The change which is alleged to have taken place in the weight of the carcase of the sheep, in the quality of the fleece, and in its usefulness for the purposes of manufacture.*

The increased weight of the carcase is established by this inquiry. Amongst other evidence to this point,

Mr. Francis Hale, a farmer at Alringham, in Suffolk, having a flock of two thousand South Down sheep, says, in answer to the following questions,*

Q. Have you endeavoured to increase the size of your sheep to make the carcase heavier?

A. Yes, by the increase of food, but not by any other description of larger sheep.

Q. By a particular selection of Rams of the same breed?

A. Yes, I endeavour to get stock as large as I can of the same quality.

Q. Have you succeeded in doing that?

A. Yes, but it depends entirely upon the seasons. Upon our poor land, if we get a sharp winter the turnips are destroyed, our produce is less, and if we have a dry summer, the result is the same.

Q. Have you found the wool of the same quality upon these larger sheep?

* Report, page 133.

A. I do not pretend to be a sufficient judge of that, but I keep the same description of sheep.

This is the sum and substance of this division of the question, the interest of the farmer to increase the weight of the carcase of South Down sheep, by giving them food different from what they formerly fed upon. By converting the fine sweet herbage of the Downs to the succulent food produced upon arable lands, and the introduction of turnips and other green crops, with the increase of the weight of the carcase of the South Down sheep, the wool becomes stronger and coarser, less adapted for the purpose of carding, and the manufacture of cloth, but better adapted for the purpose of combing and the manufacture of stuffs. This opinion is confirmed by Mr. Nottidge, a most respectable woolstapler, residing at Bermondsey; he has carried on that business since the year 1792, and speaks from experience: his opinion is—

“As far as my observation goes, whenever inclosures take place, and the land becomes better cultivated, they keep a better kind of sheep, a larger kind of sheep; and South Down Sheep of a good size are always more marketable than a small size.”*

And prior to that, he states that “he had purchased from one flock, in the county of Sussex, since 1792 up to the present time; that in the year 1814 there were 14 to 15 fleeces per tod, and they are now 11½ fleeces per tod, so that there is an increase of weight of about one-third, and of course a deterioration in quality.”† This statement is fully confirmed by Mr. Hubbard, who delivered a table to the Committee, showing the increase of weight of the British fleece, since 1800‡, when Mr. Luccock made

* Report, 222.

† Page 222.

‡ Pages 424, 425.

his table of the weight of the fleece of different counties, the result of which table is calculated upon the same number of sheep as in 1800.

The produce of English Wool in 1800 was 393,236 Packs.
Do. Do. 1828 was 463,169 Packs.

It is also remarkable that the weights of the fleece of Long Wool of Kent and Lincolnshire have decreased in weight by the cross with the Leicester sheep, whilst the fleece of the Short Wool sheep has uniformly increased.—This table is further confirmed by Mr. Fison:—speaking of the Norfolk fleeces he says—“The weight twenty years ago was 2½ lb. per fleece; the weight is now 3 lb. to 3½ lb. per fleece.” It is said by some of the wool growers, that the wool of the fleece is not deteriorated by increase of weight; they maintain that their wool is as good now as it was twenty years since; but there is a great difference betwixt what is stated from memory, and what is stated from practice, and from written documents. The farmer may imagine that his wool remains equally fine, the deterioration has been gradual, and has come on imperceptibly, but let that be compared with the various tables of sorted wool.

That made by Mr. Fison† in which in 1793 there
were 200 lb. prime, 1st sort.
52 lb. head, 4th sort.
Whilst in 1827, there were 14 lb. prime, 1st sort.
152 lb. head, 4th sort.

* Report, page 356.

† Page 381.

Another by Mr. Cunningham,* of various flocks, confirming the same result.

| | | |
|-----------------|-------|---------------------------|
| Tuckwell Flock, | 1815, | 1244 lb. prime 1st class. |
| | | 88 lb. head, 4th class. |
| | 1827, | 638 lb. prime, 1st class. |
| | | 463 lb. head, 4th class. |

Mr. Brook's sorting confirms the same,†^d
All the fine classes are reduced in quantity, whilst the coarse are increased in the same proportion: this sorting too is carried on by servants, not interested in making a false or wrong report; they exercise their best judgment for the interest of their masters, and their inclination would, if any thing, lead them to increase the quantity of fine or high priced wool. The deterioration is completely established, and the reasons given for this change are the number of inclosures, the difference of food, and the increase of the carcase. It is confirmed by various agriculturists and experienced farmers.

The late Earl of Sheffield, whose authority must have the greatest weight with the wool growers, and especially with those of the County of Sussex, writes in 1785:—

“As to the Irish wool it is certainly much decreased in fineness, but the increased quantity more than compensates. Sir Wm. Petty mentions the fleece to weigh about two pounds, the Irish fleeces instead of 2lb. are now double or near treble that weight‡” And his

* Report, page 383.

† Appendix to Report, pages 640 and 644.

‡ Observations on the Manufactures and Trade of Ireland, by John Lord Sheffield, page 163.

Lordship gives the following note—“The writer of these observations can say from experience that the increased quantity more than compensates for quality. His flock, consisting of above 1000 sheep, was originally from the South Downs of Sussex. It was crossed ten years ago with one of Mr. Bakewell's rams, whose wool was by no means of the coarsest or longest kind. The fleeces were increased from an average of 2½lb., which sold for 9d. per lb. to full 5lb. which sold for 8d. at the time wool was cheapest. The fleeces have returned towards their former weight they average about 2½ lb., it sold in the year 1784 at 10d. per lb. only, although the price of fine wool is higher than it was a few years ago, and although some of the fleeces were so fine as to weigh only one pound five ounces. *It is clear then that five pounds of coarser wool at 8d. answers better than 2½ at 10d., and in general what is most beneficial to the individual in matters of this kind is best for the country.*”*

Mr. Culley, one of the most intelligent farmers of Northumberland, in his observations on live stock, printed in 1807, speaking of Herefordshire sheep, says:—

“The sheep that have produced the finest wool are kept lean, and produce 1½ lb. each; if better kept, they grow larger, and produce more wool, but inferior in quality. The true Herefordshire breed are properly called Ryeland sheep, from the land formerly being thought capable of producing no better grain than Rye, being a tract of very poor land, but not capable of producing any kind of grain.”

Sir Charles Turner, of Kirkleatham, who lived in

* Lord Sheffield's Observations, page 163.

the year 1790, than whom no man paid more attention to the breed of English sheep, with a view to the profit of the farmer, says :

“ The Herefordshire sheep must not be quite the finest sort of wool, but mixed with a stronger wool, it will then be more in quantity, though about 2d. per lb. less in value.”

By thus attending to the profit of the wool from weight, and to the profit of the carcase, the breeds of English sheep, which produced the finest wool, are almost entirely extinct: the Ryeland sheep are now scarce known.

In reviewing the history of wool, it is evident that in proportion to the increase of population, and the weight of the carcase of sheep for food, so has been the deterioration of wool; and looking particularly to this country, the wool appears to have been deteriorating from the period when it was first noticed in our records. In tracing the incidental mention of Wool, in the early periods of history, it is clearly established that the wool of Great Britain was formerly of a finer quality than that produced in any other part of the globe, but the deterioration has been gradually going forwards.

A very interesting account of the wool of Great Britain, was published in an Appendix to the Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland, on the subject of Shetland Wool, in 1790. It is understood that the paper was written by Dr. Anderson and Sir J. Sinclair, and, being published by an Agricultural Society, it will have the more weight; to that, to Wansley's Brief History of Wool, to Smith's Memoirs of Wool, and to Macpherson's History of Commerce, I am chiefly indebted for information on this subject. The

fineness of British wool was such as to induce the Romans while they were in possession of this Island, to establish a cloth manufacture at Winchester, for the use of the Emperors; * this, therefore, must have been deemed the finest wool in the world at that time, for it is well known that the Romans were peculiarly attentive to sheep, and held fine wool in the highest degree of estimation, and that then almost all the civilized nations in the globe were subjected to the power of Rome. Before they became acquainted with Great Britain, the wool of Turdetania, a province of ancient Spain was much esteemed by them, but that in time gave place to the wool of the Coraxi, a people of Asia. Strabo, speaking of Turdetania, says—“ *Frequens inde primum vestis veniebat, nunc vero Corasorum amplius lanificium excellentissimæ pulchritudinis, unde admissarii arietes talento emantur.*” A talent was equal to £216 sterling; a high price for fine wool Ram. Strabo lived under the reign of Augustus, before the productions of Britain were well known to the Romans, and it appears from the fact above stated, that even the wool of the Coraxi was in its time deemed inferior to that of this island; for it was here that the Roman Emperors, during their most luxuriant era chose to supply themselves with their most sumptuous robes. †

In conformity with this idea, we find that Dionysius Alexandrinus, in his treatise “ *De Situ Orbis,*” as quoted by Hollingshed, makes use of the following hyperbolic phrase, strongly expressive of the uncommon fineness of British wool, as well as of the dexterity

* Camden's Britannia, (Gibson) page 118.

† Camden's Britannia, (Gibson) page 118.

of the British spinsters. "The wool of Britain is often spun so fine, that it is in a manner comparable to a Spider's draught."*

The first mention of the importation of wool is noticed in the reign of Henry II.

"A confirmation of the gild, with all the freedom they enjoyed in the reign of Henry II. was made to the weavers of London in the year 1185, and in the patent it was directed, that if any weaver mixed Spanish wool with English in making cloth, the chief magistrate of London should burn it."†

The inference which has been drawn from this is, "From such a regulation it seems probable that English wool was then superior to that of Spain, which in later times has obtained the first character."‡

This inference may be correct, but it is quite as probable that the same spirit which gave rise to the investigation in the reign of George IV. influenced the aristocracy in the reign of Henry I.; that feeling may be hereditary in some noble families, and may have been handed down to the present day in its original purity.

We have some idea of the value of English wool in the reign of Edward III., as well as the relative qualities produced in the several counties

The Parliament which met in February, 1338, granted the King 20,000 sacks of wool already shorn, he giving security for the payment of it. He accordingly appointed commissioners to take one-half of the wool, now ready, from all persons without exception. He ordered them to relieve the merchants whose wool

* Hollingshed's Chron. of England, page 221.

† Stow's Survey of London, Ed. 1618, page 515.

‡ Macpherson's Annals of Commerce.

he had taken, by giving his own obligation to their creditors, in exchange for those of the merchants, and he fixed the price payable in two years, at which the best wool of the several shires should be settled for per sack, as follows:—

| | | | |
|---|----------|--------|-----------|
| Hereford..... | 12 Marks | £8 0 0 | per Sack. |
| Salop | 10½ Do. | 7 0 0 | |
| Lincoln | 10 Do. | 6 13 4 | |
| Gloucester, Worcester, Chester, and Flint | | 6 6 8 | |
| Leicester, Stafford, Oxford, Somerset, York, (except Craven)..... | | 6 0 0 | |
| Northampton, Nottingham..... | | 5 13 4 | |
| Warwick | | 5 6 8 | |
| Cambridge, Huntingdon, Bedford, Buckingham, Essex, Hertford, Rutland, Berks, Wilts, South- ampton, Derby | | 5 0 0 | |
| Dorset | | 4 13 4 | |
| Kent, Surry, Sussex, Middlesex, London, Norfolk, Suffolk, Lancaster | | 4 0 0 | |
| Craven, in Yorkshire | | 3 13 4 | |
| Durham | | 3 6 8 | |

All inferior wool as they could agree.

London, Ipswich, Yarmouth, Lyme, Boston, Kingston-upon-Hull, Newcastle, Sandwich, and Southampton, were the ports appointed for shipping the wool for the continent.*

Thus it appears that even in the reign of Edward III. the counties which now produce the finest wool were

* Rymer's Acta Manuser, Edward III., Vol. III. No. 7, c. 9.—Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, Vol. I. p. 521.

then the most celebrated for it: Hereford and Salop were most esteemed, whilst Sussex is almost at the bottom of the scale.

Hector Boethius, who wrote about the year 1460, takes notice of the fineness of British wool.

Louis Guiciardin, who wrote the History of the Low Countries, about 1470, when the Flemish States were in their highest glory, takes notice, on several occasions, of the great supplies of wool which those States obtained from Spain, as well as England, and he gives the first place to that of England: he calls English wool *lane finissime*, and Spanish wool he calls *lane bonissime*.* He also says, in speaking of the wool of the low countries—" *Le lane del paese sono grosse, et non ha che fare di bonta con quella di Spagna, et maneo con quella d' Inghilterra.*"†

Rapin states that English wool sold in Flanders anno 1337, at the exorbitant rate of £40 per sack; ten thousand sacks having brought in Brabant no less than £400,000.‡ This superiority in the quality of English wool over all others then generally known, continued to the time of Elizabeth.

In Hackluyt's Collection, Vol. II. p. 161, it appears that he, Mr. Richard Hackluyt, of Oxford, a man of great knowlege in those days, having been appointed to draw up a set of instructions for Mr. Hublethorne, a dyer, who was sent to Persia, with a view to perfect himself in the art of dyeing, expresses himself respecting English wool, as follows:

* Guicciardini Deer de Paese Bassi, p. 122.

† Page 10. The wool of this country is coarse, and cannot be compared with that of Spain, and far less with that of England.

‡ Rapin, Acta Rigia, p. 151.

" For that England hath the best wool and cloth in the world;" and in another set of instructions for a principal English factor at Constantinople, are the following remarkable particulars:

" You cannot denie that this realme yieldeth the most fine wooll, the most soft, the most strong wooll, the most durable cloth, and most apt of nature of all others to receive die; and no island, nor any other kingdome so small, doeth yeild so great abundance of the same. Spain now aboundeth with woolls, and the same are clothed, i. e. draped or made into cloth. Turkey hath woolls, and so have divers provinces of Christendome and Heathenesse, and cloth is made of them in divers places.

" But if England have the most fine and the most excellent woolls of the world, in all respects, as it cannot be denied but it hath; if there may be added to the same, excellent artificiaall and true making, and excellent dyeing; then no doubt but we shall have vent for our clothes, although the world did abound in woolls much more than it doeth."*

The deterioration of English wool is first mentioned in history in the reign of James I.

" King James, in a special commission to many lords and gentlemen, in 1622, concerning the decay of trade in England, represents that from the general complaints of our subjects at home, as also by information from our ministers employed beyond sea, it appears that the cloth of this kingdom hath of late years wanted that estimation and vent in foreign parts which it formerly

* Hackluyt's Collections, Vol. II. p. 161 and 163.

“ had, and that the wools of the kingdom are fallen much
“ from their wonted values.”*

English wool does not after this period appear to have excited general attention to fineness of quality, till the middle and latter end of the last century, when the improvement of the British fleece was again brought forward, and encouraged by agricultural societies; Lord Somerville, Lord Sheffield, and others in England, and Sir John Sinclair in Scotland, were unwearied in their attention to it; but the deterioration of British wool was fully admitted at that time. Dr. Anderson thought this deterioration arose from the laws which were passed to prohibit the exportation of English wool, and he says, (1790)†

“ Before the prohibition took place, the difference
“ between the price of fine and of coarse wool must have
“ been very great, because as the duty on the exportation
“ of wool was the same in all cases, it was only that
“ which was very fine, and which of course bore a very
“ high price in foreign markets, that could find its way
“ thither. No sooner, however, was this outlet stopped,
“ than the immense glut of that kind of wool in the home
“ market would lower the price of that fine wool so very
“ much as to make it no longer worth the wool growers’
“ while to rear it. Regardless therefore of the quality of
“ his wool any longer, his attention must now be turned
“ chiefly towards the improving the carcase of his sheep,
“ and therefore a breed of coarse wooled sheep might be
“ come more profitable to him than the fine wooled, which
“ used to return the best profit.”*

Mr. Wansey, who answered the observations of Dr. Anderson, in 1791 says: “ The reason why the farmer

* *Fœdera* V. xvii. p. 410.

† Appendix to Report of the Highland Society, p. 46.

“ and wool grower became regardless of his wools was not
“ from a despair of selling fine wool, but from his being en-
“ abled by the improving state of his country, (arising from
“ its increased commerce, riches, and luxury) to make the
“ flesh of his sheep a principal object of attention, a larger
“ breed of sheep was therefore adopted, which naturally
“ produced a coarse kind of wool; but finding the natural
“ feed of the country would not maintain this new sort, he
“ had recourse to artificial grasses and turnips, which
“ latter is found very injurious to wool, but the farmer still
“ made as much money from his fleece as he did before,
“ though sold at a less price, because of the increased
“ quantity of it. The flesh of mutton was not formerly the
“ principal food of the English, as it now is. Sheep are
“ now kept for the sake of mutton, which were formerly
“ kept chiefly for the sake of wool, as is the case with
“ Spaniards, where fine wooled sheep is mere carrion,
“ and never eaten.”

With respect to British Merino wool too, we are indebted to his late Majesty, George III., whose public, as well as private life was devoted, to what he considered the best interests of his country. By availing himself of every advantage and every opportunity, which his exalted station afforded to improve the welfare of his kingdom, and by his personal attention to farming, he set an example which was followed by noblemen and country gentlemen, and farmers through the whole island.

About the year 1780, some Spanish sheep had by great interest been obtained by the King of France, and the Elector of Saxony, and the flocks of those countries had thereby been materially improved, his Majesty procured samples of wool from Germany, as well as some sheep from Spain; the samples were given in charge

to Sir Joseph Banks, he requested the opinions of persons conversant with the subject, and amongst others he applied to Mr. Maitland, who, for more than forty years, was Chairman of the Wool and Woollen Trades, and though now, retired from public and active life, may look back to years devoted to the interests and welfare of his neighbours and friends, and in his retirement has carried with him the esteem and affection of all who have the happiness to know him. The result of this investigation could not be so well expressed as in his own words:—

“ It has, I believe been doubted by many, whether
 “ the quality of English short wool is equal to that which
 “ is produced on the Continent; but, about twenty-nine
 “ years ago I had an opportunity, through the medium of
 “ a highly distinguished character, not less eminent for
 “ the extent of his philosophical researches, than for his
 “ virtues in private life, of comparing the various wools
 “ produced in Germany with those of the growth of Eng-
 “ land, and on that occasion I had the satisfaction to as-
 “ certain, that the short as well as the long wools of this
 “ country were superior to those of the north of Europe.
 “ The opportunity to which I allude, derived its origin
 “ from the following circumstance:—Samples had been
 “ collected by the directions of a certain great personage
 “ from Germany, with the express view of ascertaining
 “ their corresponding qualities, with the different wools
 “ grown in England; and that, not from motives of idle
 “ curiosity, or of private advantage, but in the regular
 “ pursuit of the one grand object of his long and glorious
 “ life, namely, the advancement of the happiness, inde-
 “ pendence, and prosperity of his people. These samples
 “ were, at the instance of my Right Honourable and
 “ respected friend, sent to me with a request, that I would

“ obtain the most correct intelligence possible as to their
 “ several qualities, and answer a variety of questions, cal-
 “ culated to elicit complete information upon the subject.
 “ With the assistance of the best judges of this article of
 “ wool in London, and of the best informed manufacturers
 “ from the different clothing counties, who were then in
 “ town, I had the gratification of being enabled, after a
 “ minute and attentive investigation to make a satisfactory
 “ report on the subject, which was graciously received,
 “ with the condescending assurance, that it should not be
 “ made public, in consequence of my having expressed to
 “ my Right Hon. Friend a wish to that effect, when I
 “ undertook the business, under an apprehension that no
 “ possible good could be derived from the communication
 “ of its contents to foreigners. One result, however, of
 “ the examination of the wools in question on which we
 “ were all agreed, and which I may be permitted, without
 “ impropriety, to mention, was that two only of the samples
 “ submitted to our inspection possessed the same strength
 “ in staple or hair, as the wools grown in this country,
 “ whether of the combing or carding class, (which most
 “ resembles them in all other respects) and those two
 “ samples were decidedly finer and better in quality than
 “ any wools of English growth, with which we could
 “ compare them. From their appearance they were con-
 “ sidered to be, in point of quality, equal to the best
 “ Leonesa wool then imported from Spain, although it
 “ was impossible at that period to state positively, that
 “ they were so; for although his Majesty in the preced-
 “ ing year had employed the distinguished character who
 “ committed these samples to me to procure some of the
 “ Merino sheep from Spain, and although a number of
 “ them, by his judicious management and indefatigable at-

“tention, had been brought into this country, yet no wool
 “cut from them or their progeny, since their arrival, had
 “at that time passed under the hands of a British manufac-
 “turer, so as to enable us to say more on the subject of such
 “wool, had it been before us, than on these samples, which
 “were confessedly from the Merino race which had been
 “some time domiciled in Saxony, but none of which had
 “before been seen, to my knowledge, in England. In 1792,
 “his Majesty succeeded in adding to his Anglo Merino
 “flock five Rams and thirty-five Ewes of the very highest
 “class in Spain, and from these sheep the best stock now
 “in this country is derived; but this was not accom-
 “plished without considerable difficulty, and the exertion
 “of an influence which an inferior person did not possess;
 “several individuals of great influence having previously
 “and ineffectually exerted every means in their power to
 “accomplish the same object. Nevertheless, a large
 “quantity of Merino sheep was soon afterwards imported
 “from Spain into England, and some of them of good
 “family; but none of these which I had an opportunity
 “to examine, were in my opinion, equal to the last impor-
 “tation of the royal flock.”

His Majesty distributed some of the Spanish sheep amongst agriculturists most likely to preserve the quality of the wool, and in August 1804, part of his flock was sold at public auction, in order to excite attention, and spread the breed more generally through the country. The account of the royal auction cannot fail to be interesting, it is copied from the *Morning Chronicle*, August, 1804.

SALE OF
 PART OF HIS MAJESTY'S FLOCK OF SPANISH SHEEP.
 IN AUGUST, 1804.

It is a singular circumstance, considering the great length of time that fine or broad woollen cloths have been in use in Europe, that the wool from a particular breed of sheep, kept only in Spain, where there are exceedingly large flocks of them, should have been essential to its fabrication. These sheep are known by the name of the *Merino Breed*, and were peculiar to Spain till about the year 1786, when the unfortunate Louis XVI. introduced a flock of them into France, the progeny of which are still subsisting; and their wool possessing all its original qualities, upon the national farm at Rambouillet, and in the neighbouring communes. His Britannic Majesty was not unmindful of this object, and within a year of the same period began, and continued from time to time, the importation of small flocks of Merino sheep, which were, with his Majesty's known liberality, presented to different Agriculturists and Breeders, or sold, with a view of disseminating the breed, at the common prices of English sheep at the time. In the year 1792, through the medium of Lord Auckland, who had been Ambassador to Spain, his Majesty procured from the Marchioness del Campo d'Alange, forty of the best Spanish sheep, in exchange for eight fine English coach horses; this flock his Majesty confided to the care of Sir Joseph Banks, Bart. President of the Royal Society, who has paid more attention to the subject of wool, and is, without doubt, the most perfectly informed on all points relating to its production and uses, than any other man. His Royal Highness the Duke of York's Park, at Oatlands, was selected as the scene of these interesting and national experiments.

Sir Joseph Banks had assiduously employed himself upon his estate in Lincolnshire, since the first introduction of Spanish Sheep, in trying the effect on wool and carcase, of all the crosses which could be made between them and the different breeds in England; but on receiving charge of the Royal Merino flock, in 1792, he disposed of all his own sheep, in which there was any mixture of Spanish, and has confined his views in the manage-

ment of the Royal flock to the preservation of the original breed of 1792, having since admitted no crosses, not even of newly-imported Spanish sheep, however superior their pretensions. These sheep are very far from handsome in their shape, and too generally look thin and poor; they are principally distinguished from other sheep, next to the superior fineness of the fibre of their wool, by the dirty appearance of their fleece outside, though beautifully white within, owing to the greasy matter, or *yolle*, as it is called, with which it abounds, causing the dirt of the land to adhere to the wool; they have also white faces, of a peculiar *silley* appearance; just above the nose are two or three singular wrinkles, and upon the head behind the horns, is a soft protuberance of flesh; they are also less in size than a great proportion of the English sheep. The Merino flock continued healthy, and increased very fast, but the buyers of wool were averse to the idea that any wool grown in England could answer the purpose of that imported from Spain, in the manufacture of fine cloth; and Sir Joseph Banks was unable to obtain more than 2s. *per pound* for the wool of these sheep in 1796 and only 2s. 6d. in 1797. In 1798, this wool was washed previous to the sale, and sorted into three different parcels, according to its fineness, as is done in Spain, viz. prime wool, or *Raffinos* (R), which sold for 5s. choice locks, or *Finas* (F), at 3s. 6d. and *Fribs* or *Terceros*, (T), which fetched 2s. 6d. The fleeces of 1799 from this increasing flock, treated in the same way, was sold, the prime wool, or R's, for 5s. 6d.; the choice locks, or F's for 3s. 6d.; and the *Fribs*, or T's, for 2s.; 5s. 6d. being in these two last years the standing price of the very best imported wool. The Royal *Merino* flock at Oatlands, continuing to increase, in 1800, the R's produced 5s., the F's 3s., and the T's 1s. 6d. In 1801, the R's fetched 5s. 6d., the F's 3s. 6d., and the T's 1s. 9d. Eleven wether or castrated sheep, were this year fattened, and at Christmas 1801, sold at good prices: the mutton also proving excellent in quality, and very unexpectedly the *pelt* wool, or that obtained from the skin, by the fell-monger, produced 10s. for each sheep, after all expenses attending it were paid.

In 1803, Sir Joseph Banks obtained for the wool of his Majesty's Spanish flock, the R's 5s. 9d., the F's 3s. 6d., and the T's 1s. 9d.; and in the year 1803, the prime or R's produced 6s. 9d., the F's 4s. 6d., and the T's 2s. The quantity of the inferior sorts of wool from each fleece has evidently decreased since these sheep were in England, and at this time, less of the *fribs* will be found in any number of fleeces of his Majesty's wool, than in the same

number and weight of fleeces produced in Spain—a proof that the wool is not disposed to degenerate in our climate. The wool of the present season was washed on the backs of the sheep in the English way, and sold *all together, without scouring or sorting, at 4s. 6d. per pound.* The Royal Merino flock then consisted of 100 ewes, 5 rams, and 78 lambs; these 78 lambs being the produce of 90 ewes, with which four rams were used; also of 23 shearling rams, 7 rams of greater ages, and 14 ewes, which were selected for the intended sale, which took place on Wednesday last in a paddock in Richmond Park, by the side of Kew Foot Lane, not far from the Pagoda.

Among those who have most distinguished themselves in seconding the noble views of his Majesty in introducing and extending the breed of these sheep, are to be named Lord Somerville; Dr. Parry, of Bath; Mr. Bridge, of Winford Eagle; Mr. Ridgway, of Upperton; Mr. Tollett, of Gloucestershire; and the Bath Agricultural Society; while Mr. John Maitland, of Basinghall-street; Mr. Laycock, of the Borough; and Mr. Edridge, of Chippenham, have done themselves great honour in their endeavours to promote the sale and manufacture of English Merino wool. Mr. Giblet, of Bond-street; and Mr. King, of Newgate Market, are also deserving of great praise for their exertions in removing the prejudice which was generally entertained against Spanish mutton, on the first introduction of the Merinos into this country.

Mr. Tollet possesses a ram, bred from a ram and ewe sold to him from the Royal flock in 1801, which in June last yielded 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. of wool of the very first quality. The same care and attention which has been for some years past paid to the improvement of other breeds of sheep in this kingdom, by breeding constantly from the most perfect animals in the flock in preference to others, has succeeded in the carcasses of several of the Royal Merino flock; and, as Sir Joseph Banks, in a late Address to the Public, observes—"Give a justifiable hope, that by a due selection of rams, and a correct judgment in matching them, Merino sheep will in time be produced, with carcasses perfectly fashionable, and wool as perfectly fine." The same Address, after noticing that the demand for his Majesty's Merino sheep increases prodigiously, particularly in Gloucestershire, thus introduces the notice of the presentsale from his Majesty's flock:

"As speculation on the value of Spanish sheep is evidently on the increase, and a reasonable probability now appears, that his Majesty's patriotic exertions in introducing the breed, will at least be duly appreciated—and properly understood; it would be palpably

unjust should the views of those who wish to derive a fair advantage from the sale of the progeny of Spanish sheep, purchased by them from the Royal stock, be in future impeded by a continuation of the sale of the King's sheep, at prices below their real value."

This circumstance having been stated to the King, his Majesty was graciously pleased to permit the rams and ewes that are to be parted with from the Royal Merino flock this year, to be sold by auction, in the same manner as is done at Woburn by his Grace the Duke of Bedford, and at Holkham by Mr. Coke, on the presumption of this being the most likely manner of placing the best individuals of their improved breeds in the hands of persons most likely to preserve, and further to improve them.

Notwithstanding the heavy and almost incessant rain, on Wednesday morning, nearly fifty gentlemen and breeders of sheep assembled soon after eleven o'clock, at the pens of sheep intended for sale, and minutely examined them. Sir Joseph Banks, who has but just got abroad from a severe fit of the gout, ventured out, and staid in the field the whole time.

About two o'clock, Mr. Farnham, the auctioneer, of Richmond, opened the business by a short but neat speech, on his Majesty's gracious views in promoting the breed of excellent sheep before them, and read the printed conditions of the sale; after Sir Joseph Banks had stated, that his friends, Sir Richard Worsley, of the Isle of Wight, and Sir James Reddall, of Scotland, not being able to attend, had commissioned him to bid for six or more of the sheep, the sale commenced; at which much keen bidding was seen among the amateurs and breeders present.

The first twenty-three lots consisted each of a single shearing.

Lot 1 was a ram labouring under a temporary privation of sight, which Sir Joseph Banks and Richard Stanford, the King's shepherd stated to be not very uncommon with these sheep at this season but from which there was no doubt he will perfectly recover; the weight of his fleece was stated to be, at the last shearing 3lb. 4oz.; he was knocked down to Captain Macarthur, at £6 15s. after Sir Joseph had apprised him that an old Act of Parliament stood in the way of exporting sheep from this country, the Captain's object being to take the sheep which he was purchasing to New South Wales, in about three weeks time, to add to the flock which he is rearing near to Botany Bay, with a degree of success which promises to be of the greatest national importance. The sheep intended for Lot 2 were unwell, and not

offered for sale. Lot 3, fleece 4lb. 3oz. was sold to George Holme Sumner, Esq. at £7 12s. Lot 4, fleece 3lb. of very fine wool, was sold to Mr. Knowles, at £9 10s. Lot 5, fleece 4lb. was bought by Mr. Andrews, for Mr. Beckingham, near Canterbury, at ten guineas. Lot 6, a very lively sheep, was bought by Captain Macarthur, at £11. Lot 7, fleece 3lb. 12oz. with bad eyes at present, was knocked down to Sir Joseph Banks, for one of his friends, at £6 7s. Lot 8, fleece 5lb. 4oz. was sold to Mr. Knowles at ten guineas and a half. Lot 9, fleece 3lb. 12oz. was bought by J. W. Allan, Esq. near Bury, at 30 guineas. Lot 10, fleece 3lb. 6oz. was sold to Mr. Leith, at ten guineas, and a half. Lot 11, fleece 3lb. 12oz. of better wool than the last, sold to Captain Macarthur, at 15 guineas. Lot 12, fleece 5lb. 4oz. was sold to George Holme Sumner, Esq. at twenty-seven guineas. Lot 13, fleece 3lb. 4oz. was bought by Captain Macarthur, at 16 guineas. Lot 14, was sold to Mr. Warren, at 15 guineas. Lot 15, a sheep at present blind, fleece 4lb. 18oz. sold to Captain Macarthur, at 22 guineas. Lot 16, a very perfect sheep and fine fleece 4lb. 4oz. sold to Sir Joseph Banks, at 20 guineas. Lot 17, a sheep having the disorder called the foot-rot, fleece 4lb. 12oz. was sold to Mr. Warren at £12. Lot 18, fleece 4lb. 8oz. was bought by Sir Joseph Banks, at fourteen guineas. Lot 19, fleece 4lb. 12oz. very fine wool, was sold to George Holme Sumner, at 20 guineas. Lot 20, fleece 4lb. 6oz. was bought by Sir Joseph Banks, at 15 guineas. Lot 21, fleece 5lb. to Mr. Beckingham, at 25 guineas. Lot 22, fleece 4lb. 3oz. to Captain Macarthur, at 21 guineas. Lot 23, fleece 4lb. 8oz. to Sir Joseph Banks, at 20 guineas. Lot 24, fleece 5lb. 12oz. to Mr. Freeman, near Hendley, at 42 guineas, which finished the shearing rams. Lot 25 was a full-mouthed ram, which had not been used, though so expressed by mistake in the bill; he sold to General Robinson, of Scotland, for seven guineas and a half. Lot 26, a full mouth ram, called Young Snag, four years and half old, whose sire was in as much repute among the King's sheep, as Eclipse among race horses, and who had been used in the King's flock, fleece 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. was sold to G. H. Sumner, for 18 guineas. Lot 27, a four-tooth'd ram, which has not been used in the Royal flock, fleece 7lb. 8oz. was sold to Mr. Jefferson, at 38 guineas. Lot 28, a ditto, fleece 28lb. was sold to Mr. Heaven, at 25 guineas. Lot 29, a four tooth ram, which was used last year in the King's flock, was sold to John Proctor Anderdon, Esq. at 24 guineas. Lot 30, a ditto, fleece 7lb. 2oz. was sold to Captain Macarthur, for 27 guineas.

Lot 31, a good ditto, fleece 6lb. 8oz. was sold to Mr. Kidd, at 24 guineas, which completed the lots of rams; the remaining 14 lots being full-mouthed ewes, which had been bred from in the Royal flocks, and were warranted good bags. Lot 32, sold to Mr. Beckingham, at nine guineas. Lot 33, to Mr. Hallett, at eight guineas. Lot 34, to Mr. Beckingham, at seven guineas and a half. Lot 35, to Mr. Freeman, at seven guineas. Lot 36, to Mr. Freeman, at eight guineas. Lot 37, to Mr. Leith, at nine guineas and a half. Lot 38, to Mr. Eyton, at eleven guineas. Lot 39, to Mr. Knowles, at seven guineas. Lot 40, to Mr. Beckingham, at eight guineas. Lot 41, to Captain Macarthur, at 11 guineas. Lot 42, to Mr. Campbell, at nine guineas. Lot 43, to Colonel Greville, at nine guineas. Lot 44, to General Robinson, at seven guineas. Lot 45, to Mr. Hallett, at six guineas.

The sale ended about a quarter-past four o'clock, when Sir Joseph Banks stated, that the prices at which the sheep had been sold exceeded his Majesty's and his own expectations and wishes on the subject; his Majesty *never having before sold a Spanish sheep for more than six guineas, they were always before sold by private contract*, while he had given away more than 170 sheep: but from the eagerness exhibited this day in bidding, he had no doubt but his Majesty's intentions of placing the sheep in those gentlemen's hands, who would most value and attend to the increasing of the breed, would be fully answered. It was stated that the sheep might stay three days in his Majesty's pasture, or even a longer time, at the risk of the purchaser, if not convenient to remove them sooner; but such was the eagerness of the buyers to bear off their lots, that two or three carts appeared in the field in a few minutes, and were loaded with the sheep; and one gentleman took away a sheep he had bought in a chaise with him! Besides the gentlemen mentioned above as present, we noticed Henry Hugh Hoare, Esq. Mr. Chute, Mr. Snart, superintendent of his Majesty's farm at Richmond, Mr. Lawrence, author of "The New Farmer's Calendar," &c. Mr. Farey, &c. &c. This shew and sale of sheep is intended to be annual; and next year a larger number of ewes are intended for sale, his Majesty's flock having now arrived at the number intended to be kept.

The feelings thus excited to the subject caused great attention to the quality of wool, and though the quality of English wool was thereby improved, particularly the Hereford and finest kinds, it appears to require the constant importation of fresh stock from Spain and Germany, in order to keep up that improvement, if indeed, fine wool can be obtained in the present state of cultivation. The wool from Merino sheep in England has never reached the same degree of fineness as in Germany; the fleece improved in quality when the sheep were removed there, from Spain: this may be accounted for from difference of food and the system almost universally adopted in Germany of housing the sheep in winter, and feeding them upon dry food which is very favourable to fine wool. The English grower of Merino wool has embarked in an experiment which with the disadvantage of succulent coarse herbage may probably, under no circumstances, succeed, and if it succeed, must depend upon constant and renewed importation of sheep.

The grower of South Down Wool suffers, (if he can be said to suffer, when the quality of his wool is deteriorated, whilst the weight and price of his mutton are thereby improved,) more from the altered state of cultivation than from depression of price, when quality is compared with quality, and price with price, betwixt the years, when that mode of cultivation was introduced, and the present time.

The change which has taken place in the quality of English Wool is not without its advantages; I think it will be evident, that what the farmer loses in quality, he gains in quantity, the weight of his wool is increased and the weight of the carcase, but with the weight of the wool the length of the staple is increased, and what was

applicable to clothing purposes, or the manufacture of woollen goods, has become by its length and the improvements in machinery applicable to the manufacture of worsted goods; and the staple being smaller and finer than the staple of Long Wool of Kent and Lincoln, a better article is manufactured, so that in proportion to the increased application of that wool, and to the increased demand, the price will probably increase and the profit in labour to the country will be much greater, because in the manufacture of worsted goods much more labour is required than in that of woollen goods.

Whilst upon this head it does not appear necessary to take much notice of Earl Stanhope's Letter. It is true that his Lordship's insinuations are intended to convey his want of credit in those who have given such evidence as did not accord with his Lordship's preconceived opinions;* and it appears, it might be most difficult to change them.

"A man convinced against 'his will,'
"Is of the same opinion still."

In acknowledging the honour which the Duke of Richmond and Earl Stanhope have done me in noticing my omission of any mention of deterioration in 1819, I trust those noblemen will admit that I have now amply made up for that neglect, for I have endeavoured, chiefly with a view to their gratification, to trace the history of wool from the time of Julius Cæsar, and its deterioration from the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and as Lord Stanhope justly observes, "facts are stubborn things," it is probable

* Earl Stanhope's Letter, page 6.

the facts mentioned by the wool-sorters, and confirmed by the Earl of Sheffield, Mr. Culley, and others, will be so stubborn as to convince every one in the kingdom that British Wool is deteriorated.

6. *The various uses of Long and Short Wool.*

The felting properties of wool are known to the most common observer; hats are made entirely by the process of felting; the wool is neither spun nor woven, but locks of wool are so placed in warm water, that they mix together and make a firm solid substance.

Cloth and woollen goods are made from wool possessing this felting property; the wool is carded, spun, woven, and then by the fulling mill the process of felting takes place.

Stuffs and all worsted goods are manufactured from Long Wool, deprived of its felting qualities, this is effected by iron combs, which are heated, and while in that state, drawn through the wool, thereby depriving it of its feathery or felting properties, and making the wool approximate to the nature of silk or cotton. In order to undergo the process, great length and strength of staple were requisite, and it was supposed that the wool from sheep fed in the rich marshes of Kent and Lincoln was particularly fit for the purpose. The following may be considered the chief articles made from

| <i>Short or Uncombed Wool.</i> | <i>Long Wool.</i> |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Cloth, | Bombazets and Stuffs of all kinds. |
| Cassimere, | <i>Part Long, and Part Short Wool.</i> |
| Coatings, | Yarns, |
| Flannels, | Baize, |
| Blankets. | Carpets, |
| | Hosiery. |

7. *The application of Short Wools to the purpose of combing.*

The improvements in machinery have enabled the manufacturer to apply Short Wools having staple about three inches long and possessing strength, to the purpose of combing; this improvement has made a great change in the uses to which English wool and particularly South Down Wool is applied, so that according to a Table laid before the Committee by Mr. Hubbard,* following up the calculations of the late Mr. Luccock, which were published in 1805, the following is the result:—

| | |
|---|---------|
| The Number of Packs of Wool applicable to | |
| Clothing purposes in England 1800 | 193,475 |
| 1828 | 120,655 |
| Making a decrease... | 72,820 |
| The Number of Packs fit for Combing 1800 | 131,794 |
| 1828 | 263,847 |
| Making an increase ... | 132,053 |

A great proportion, therefore, of English wool which was in 1805 designated Short Wool adapted solely to the purposes of carding or the manufacture of woollen goods, is now designated Long Wool, and is applied to the purposes of combing, or the manufacture of worsted goods, as has been explained under the 5th head of inquiry.

* Report, page 424.

8. *The export and import of woollen cloths.*

The exportation of woollen cloths was formerly the chief part of the trade of England.

The woollen manufacture in England appears to be first mentioned in the year 500.

It is stated that the *peplum pallium* or *sagum*,* a cloak or plaid of a variety of colours, was the common article of dress in Britain, and was probably of home manufacture.

The manufacture does not appear to have made much progress till the reign of Henry I. a vast number of Flemings were driven out of their own country, by an extraordinary encroachment of the sea, and came to England in the reign of William the Conqueror. He stationed them upon the northern frontiers, chiefly at Carlisle; but Henry, finding they did not agree with his own subjects, transplanted the whole of them to a district called Ros, in Pembrokeshire; they were skilful in the woollen manufacture and considered as the first founders of the manufacture of fine woollen goods in England.† From these men the woollen manufacture took its rise in England: its increase was the greatest in the reigns of Edward III. and Elizabeth, and though it is curious to trace it through all its gradations from its earliest infancy to the present high state of perfection, such a history would not properly belong to this head of the subject; I shall therefore confine myself first to the exportation of woollen cloths.

The first mention of this in history is incidental, but proves that the exportation of woollen manufacture was considerable, even prior to the reign of Richard I. I am

* Adamnani Vita Columbæ MS. Bib. Reg. 8. Dix. liiici.

† Flor. Wig. p. 655. Wis. Malm. f. 89, l.

indebted for the history to Macpherson's Annals of Commerce. " Though I have found no express mention, in any English author, of the exportation of woollen cloth in this age, there can be little doubt that the Flemings settled in Wales who are said to have possessed the knowledge of commerce, as well as manufactures, exported some of the cloth they made. The historian of the Orkneys informs us, that two merchant ships from England, bound for Dublin, loaded with English cloths (probably the manufacture of the Flemings,) and other goods of great value, were taken near Dublin, before the conquest of Ireland by the English, by an Orkney pirate, called Swein, who, on his return home, covered his sails with the scarlet cloths, and therefore called that the scarlet cruise.*

The exportation of woollen cloth is not mentioned again till the year 1313, when it is stated,† " that the treasurer of the king of Norway took for his master's use cloth, fish, and other merchandise, to the value of £1,494 5s. sterling, from seven merchants of Lynne, whilst they were in North Bergen, for which they received no payment: this merits notice only as it shows that England had some cloth to spare for exportation.

" In 1348, a duty was paid on the exportation of woollens, viz. 14d. upon every cloth, 1d. upon every worsted cloth, and 10d. upon every lit (probably litted or dyed) cloth exported by English merchants.

" Petitions were presented, in 1347, for the repeal of these duties, but the Parliament thought it reasonable that these goods should pay in proportion to what the quantity of wool worked up in them would pay if exported in a raw state, and refused to repeal the

* Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, Vol. 1, page 345.
Ibid, Vol. 1, page 478.

" duties: the exportation of home-made woollen cloths thus appears to have become already an object of some importance."

The exportation of cloth is more clearly defined, and brought into an official state, in 1354. The following table is extracted from Smith's Memoirs of Wool.

The state of balance of the English trade, in the 28th year of Edward III., as said to be found upon record in the Exchequer, with remarks thereon.

EXPORTED.

| | | | |
|--|----------|----|---|
| 31,651½ Sacks Wool, at £6 value each, | £189,909 | 0 | 0 |
| 3,665 Felts, at 40s. each,..... | 6,073 | 1 | 8 |
| Whereof the Customs amount to | 81,624 | 1 | 1 |
| 14 Lasts, 17 Dicker, and 5 Hides of Leather, at £6 per Last, | 89 | 5 | 0 |
| Whereof the Customs amount to | 6 | 17 | 6 |
| 4,774½ Cloth, at 40s. value the Cloth, | 9,549 | 0 | 0 |
| 8,061½ Pieces of Worsted, at 16s. 8d. value per Piece, | 6,717 | 18 | 4 |
| Whereof Customs amount to..... | 215 | 13 | 7 |

Summary of the out carried commodation in Customs and Value,* £294,184 17 2

Whilst upon this point, it may be useful to see the amount of importation in the same period, and given in the same document:—

IMPORTED.

| | | | |
|--|---------|----|----|
| 1,832 Cloth, at £6 value the Cloth, | £10,992 | 0 | 0 |
| Whereof the Customs amount to ... | 91 | 12 | 0 |
| 397¾ Quintels of Wax, after the value of 40s. the hundred Quintels, | 795 | 10 | 0 |
| Whereof the Customs amount to ... | 19 | 17 | 0 |
| 1,829½ Tuns of Wine, at 40s. value per tun | 3,659 | 0 | 0 |
| Whereof the Customs amount to ... | 182 | 0 | 0 |
| Linen, Cloth, Mercery and Grocery, and all other manner of Merchandise,..... | 22,943 | 6 | 10 |
| Whereof the Customs amount to ... | 285 | 18 | 3 |
| | £38,970 | 18 | 8 |

* Smith's Memoirs of Wool, vol. 1, page 31.

Summare of the implusage of the out-carried over the in-brought commodities amounteth to £255,214. 3s. 6d.*

This document is curious and important, showing the state of the trade at that early period, and also showing that the exportation of English woollen manufactures consisted of coarse cloth, of the value of 40s. per cloth, whilst the importation of foreign cloth, probably French, was fine cloth, of the value of £6 the cloth, and proves that English wool must have been then deteriorated. With regard to the note by the Editor, the document appears to be genuine, but it probably is a statement of the London Trade, Tin and Lead were exported from Cornwall.

In 1363,† King Edward III. commanded that no man should export cloth; but the German merchants might export worsteds, and straight cloths, and those of Gascoigne might carry woollen cloths to the value of the wines imported by them.

This did not continue long, for, in the following year, several licenses were granted for the exportation of cloths.

It would be tedious, and of little use, to follow this subject, in detail, to the present period. I shall confine myself to a few striking facts, showing its increase.

* The following note is inserted by the Editor of Memoirs of Wool.
 "Although this is no avouching for this account to be genuine, nor much reason to suspect its being a forgery, yet it is plainly imperfect as wanting the two great articles of Tin and Lead, it is taken from a tract published in 1623, entitled the Circle of Commerce, by Edward Misselden, Merchant, who says he has it from an ancient manuscript of a merchant, which manuscript was at that time well known and of good authority among merchants. It has the appearance of antiquity, and shows the frugality of those times, and in consequence thereof an extraordinary balance in favour of the nation, such, I apprehend, as no later times can boast of."

Smith's Memoirs of Wool, vol. 1, page 32.

† Macpherson, 568; and Cotton's Abridgment, 95.

The exportation of cloth, in the reign of Elizabeth, was very extensive. It is stated, in a petition from the Hanseatic merchants, to the diet of the empire, in 1582, that 200,000 cloths* were yearly exported from England; three-fourths thereof were carried into Germany, and from thence a great part was carried into Poland, Denmark, and Sweden; that the remaining fourth part was sent to the Netherlands and to France.

Rapin, speaking of Camden, states, "Camden says, in his time, 'the commerce between England and the Netherlands rose nearly to twelve millions, and that the woollen trade alone rose yearly to above five millions of GOLD.' This could not possibly mean millions of pounds sterling, which would have made the exportation of woollen manufactures to the Netherlands alone equal in amount to the exportation of the present day to all parts of the world. The word GOLD must have applied to the florin or ducat, a small gold coin then current in the Netherlands, of the value of 3s. each, which would make the annual export of woollen goods to the Netherlands amount to £750,000 sterling, which was at that period an immense sum."

This construction is also put upon the expression GOLD, by Smith, in his Memoirs of Wool, who makes the following excellent observations upon it:—

"This was an immense sum for those early days of the English trade, and yet there is nothing incredible in it, all things considered. For Camden tells us, that what he says is most unquestionably true, and that he has it from good books of accounts. Nor is he less to be regarded than other historians; nor less in this par-

* Macpherson, vol. 2, page 171.

“ ticular, but much more than many others in some instances of a like nature. For, it was so near his own time, that he was a good judge of the probability of things which he had occasion to relate. He was himself a man of nice observation, had, he says, in his preface, ‘ Lord Burleigh, and the Queen’s own collections of papers, besides other helps.’ He had no bias upon his mind, in this case especially, it being a point in which passion or party, favour or prejudice, had not the least concern.”*

To which, I may be allowed to add, that passion or party favour or prejudice, ought never to have the least concern, either in those or in the present time.

Commencing from the year 1700, I have, in the following Table, stated the weights of wool imported, and the official value of Woollens exported; and the price of Wool and Wheat, so far as I have been able to collect the Returns :—

* Smith’s Memoirs of Wool, chap. 20.

TABLE

CONTAINING THE QUANTITY OF WOOL IMPORTED, THE RATE OF TAX ON WOOL, THE PRICE OF SOUTH DOWN WOOL, THE OFFICIAL VALUE OF WOOLLENS EXPORTED, AND THE AVERAGE PRICE OF WHEAT, FROM THE YEARS 1704, TO 1828, INCLUSIVE.

| Year. | Wool Imported. | Price of Wool. | Tax on Wool. | Woollens Exported. | Price of Wheat. January. | |
|-------|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| | lbs. | s. d. | s. d. | | s. d. | |
| 1704 | 1,602,674 | 0 8½ | Free. | | | |
| 1705 | 3,135,252 | 0 9 | Do. | | | |
| 1706 | 1,554,637 | 0 9 | Do. | | | |
| 1707 | 4,188,252 | 0 11 | Do. | £3,544,160 | | |
| 1708 | 4,079,533 | 1 0 | Do. | | | |
| 1709 | 4,013,114 | 1 0 | Do. | | | |
| 1710 | 2,582,295 | 1 0½ | Do. | | 5,190,637 | 42 0 |
| 1711 | 3,014,511 | 0 11½ | Do. | | 5,505,034 | 42 0 |
| 1712 | 1,998,732 | 1 4 | Do. | | 5,510,668 | 42 4 |
| 1713 | 4,263,496 | 0 11½ | Do. | | 3,806,536 | 47 2 |
| 1714 | 1,632,926 | 1 1 | Do. | | 4,390,920 | 49 8 |
| 1715 | 4,362,069 | 1 3 | Do. | | 5,172,884 | 55 7 |
| 1716 | 4,510,534 | 1 4 | Do. | | 6,011,133 | 59 10 |
| 1717 | 3,289,311 | 1 3 | Do. | 4,936,355 | 55 9 | |
| 1718 | 4,577,106 | 1 3 | Do. | 6,499,339 | 51 5 | |
| 1719 | 2,263,660 | 1 9 | Do. | 6,876,939 | 49 2 | |
| 1800 | 8,609,368 | 1 5 | Do. | | 92 7 | |
| 1801 | 7,371,774 | 1 7 | Do. | 6,917,583 | 139 0 | |
| 1802 | 7,669,798 | 1 7 | Do. | 7,321,012 | 75 6 | |
| 1803 | 5,904,740 | 1 8 | 5 3 per cwt. | 6,687,261 | 57 1 | |
| 1804 | 7,921,595 | 1 10 | Do. | 5,302,679 | 52 5 | |
| 1805 | 8,069,793 | 2 3 | 5 10 | 5,694,433 | 85 2 | |
| 1806 | 6,775,636 | 1 10 | 5 11 8-20ths | 6,005,540 | 75 11 | |
| 1807 | 11,487,050 | 2 0 | Do. | 6,247,727 | 76 9 | |
| 1808 | 2,284,482 | 1 9 | Do. | 5,372,062 | 69 5 | |
| 1809 | 6,758,954 | 3 0 | 6 4 2-20ths | 4,853,999 | 90 4 | |
| 1810 | 10,914,137 | 2 4 | Do. | 5,416,149 | 102 6 | |
| 1811 | 4,732,782 | 1 5 | Do. | 5,773,719 | 94 7 | |
| 1812 | 6,993,575 | 1 8 | Do. | 4,376,497 | 106 7 | |
| 1813 | Records burnt. | 1 11 | 6 8 | | 119 10 | |
| 1814 | 15,492,311 | 2 2 | Do. | 4,931,667 | 76 7 | |
| 1815 | 13,640,375 | 1 11 | Do. | 7,122,570 | 65 8 | |
| 1816 | 7,517,896 | 1 6 | Do. | 5,586,364 | 58 7 | |
| 1817 | 14,061,722 | 2 0 | Do. | 5,674,688 | 104 11 | |
| 1818 | 24,749,570 | 2 6 | Do. | 6,343,659 | 85 4 | |
| 1819 | 16,100,973 | 1 7 | 0 6 per lb. | 4,598,454 | 78 11 | |
| 1820 | 9,789,020 | 1 5 | 0 6 | 4,363,980 | | |
| 1821 | 16,632,028 | 1 3 | Do. | 5,500,921 | 54 6 | |
| 1822 | 19,072,364 | 1 3 | Do. | 5,943,612 | 48 10 | |
| 1823 | 19,378,249 | 1 3½ | Do. | 5,553,891 | 40 3 | |
| 1824 | 22,558,222 | 1 2 | Do. | 6,147,454 | 58 9 | |
| 1825 | 43,795,281 | 1 4 | 0 1 | 5,929,342 | 65 10 | |
| 1826 | 15,904,067 | 0 10 | 0 1 | 5,041,568 | 60 5 | |
| 1827 | 29,122,447 | 0 9 | 0 1 | 5,979,701 | 53 6 | |
| * | | | | | | |

* The importation of Wool, the price, and the tax, as well as the price of Wheat, being placed opposite the year to which they correctly belong, and the exportation of woollens being calculated to the 5th of January, each year, and, consequently, what are called exports of 1828 are, in fact 1827. In the above table the amounts exported are placed, not according to the parliamentary, but the actual year.

I shall now offer a few observations upon the foregoing Table, by comparing the importation of Foreign Wool with the exportations of woollen manufactures: it appears that the average importation in

Five years, 1772 to 1776, was 1,578,603 lbs.
Eleven years, 1777 to 1787, was 1,975,327 lbs.

And, with some fluctuation in different years, has been gradually and constantly increasing. From this, I think, it may be inferred, that the exportation of woollen manufacture prior to the year 1788, consisted of articles made altogether from English wool.

We have the returns of the exportation of woollen manufactures to Turkey, Italy, and the Straits, for seven years, viz., 1719 to 1725, which prove that this branch of trade was at that time very extensive.

THE TOTAL VALUE OF WOOLLEN MANUFACTURES,
EXPORTED TO TURKEY, ITALY, AND THE STRAITS,
FOR SEVEN YEARS—1719 TO 1725.

| Year. | Turkey. | | Italy. | | The Straits. | | Total. | |
|-------|---------|-------|--------|-------|--------------|-------|---------|-------|
| | £ | s. d. | £ | s. d. | £ | s. d. | £ | s. d. |
| 1719 | 290,673 | 13 9 | 36,951 | 12 9 | 250,788 | 8 5 | 578,413 | 14 11 |
| 1720 | 337,066 | 17 6 | 44,732 | 14 7 | 239,773 | 15 11 | 621,573 | 8 0 |
| 1721 | 120,295 | 6 8 | 22,875 | 10 10 | 289,456 | 14 3 | 432,627 | 11 9 |
| 1722 | 236,556 | 17 1 | 67,736 | 6 10 | 412,374 | 13 11 | 716,667 | 17 10 |
| 1723 | 143,508 | 16 8 | 46,472 | 15 2 | 320,812 | 18 2 | 510,794 | 10 0 |
| 1724 | 191,132 | 6 3 | 53,274 | 0 1 | 472,380 | 0 3 | 716,786 | 6 7 |
| 1725 | 240,416 | 12 11 | 81,321 | 0 5 | 370,426 | 15 3 | 692,164 | 8 7 |

JOHN OXENFORD, ASSISTANT I. G.

Custom-House, Inspector General's Office, }
April 6th, 1727. }

The trade with Germany, Spain, and Portugal was also considerable.

The exportation of woollens continued to increase until the commencement of the French revolutionary war. It was principally carried on from Yorkshire, and consisted at that time of coarse cloth, coatings, kerseys, baize, and worsted goods, almost all made from British wool.

It is evident that the different states upon the Continent being cut off from communication with this country must either have obtained their clothing from others or manufactured for themselves. The French war was the point at which our exportation to Europe declined; but in proportion to the difficulties of communicating with the Mediterranean by sea, other channels were, for a short period, opened, and the trade of Italy was continued for some time by shipments made to Hamburgh, and from thence the goods were sent by neutral vessels to the Mediterranean, as well as by the internal navigation of Germany, to the north of Italy.

The following table of the exportation of woollens, from 1790 to 1799, will prove the fact, showing that whilst the exportation of woollens to Italy was reduced from £400,000 to £40,000; the exportation to Germany increased from £220,000 to £500,000.

This table also shows that the reduced exportation of woollens to other states in Europe was amply compensated by the growing prosperity of the United States of America, which, from £1,480,000, in 1790, increased to £2,800,000, in 1799.

VALUE OF WOOLLEN MANUFACTURES EXPORTED IN TEN YEARS—1790 TO 1799 INCLUSIVE.

| COUNTRIES. | 1790 | 1791 | 1792 | 1793 | 1794 | 1795 | 1796 | 1797 | 1798 | 1799 |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Denmark and Norway..... | £18,637 | £50,839 | £41,659 | £22,970 | £29,249 | £27,927 | £38,198 | £43,377 | £21,983 | £29,959 |
| Russia..... | 76,744 | 134,224 | 132,353 | 82,401 | 71,636 | 120,135 | 153,985 | 120,138 | 136,867 | 149,789 |
| Sweden..... | 2,087 | 3,483 | 17,713 | 2,011 | 8,071 | 2,829 | 2,812 | 15,807 | 218 | 690 |
| Poland..... | 911 | 3,695 | 3,511 | 1,881 | 1,091 | 1,228 | 1,094 | 567 | 1,246 | 1,218 |
| Prussia..... | 9,519 | 13,857 | 18,040 | 17,769 | 19,268 | 27,479 | 133,903 | 159,989 | 94,846 | 39,296 |
| Germany..... | 223,226 | 255,303 | 271,638 | 217,193 | 330,024 | 503,706 | 594,898 | 641,008 | 463,019 | 427,053 |
| Holland..... | 306,414 | 313,845 | 367,583 | 265,165 | 217,381 | | 126 | 7,712 | 94 | 175 |
| France..... | 117,779 | 117,151 | 72,703 | 72,703 | 51,585 | | 27 | | | |
| Portugal and Madeira..... | 124,239 | 117,151 | 42,855 | 42,855 | | 368,060 | 425,038 | 401,920 | 488,469 | 568,798 |
| Spain and Canaries..... | 96,840 | 155,134 | 42,855 | 376,171 | 335,811 | 191,203 | 265,192 | 26 | | |
| Straits and Gibraltar..... | 434,375 | 465,373 | 259,849 | 20,807 | 23,586 | 16,696 | 24,144 | 6,910 | 34,860 | 31,774 |
| Italy and Venice..... | 346,367 | 472,221 | 80,774 | 165,040 | 181,265 | 274,095 | 295,374 | 2,651 | 26,739 | 47,410 |
| Turkey..... | 130,336 | 306,631 | 9,078 | 9,078 | 6,295 | 12,228 | 26,580 | 3,056 | 13,927 | 47,398 |
| Ireland..... | 517,178 | 34,334 | 490,271 | 178,071 | 308,759 | 458,938 | 555,963 | 360,600 | 583,964 | 916,190 |
| Isle of Man..... | 41,085 | 4,737 | 3,141 | 3,141 | 1,538 | 1,538 | 3,004 | 3,963 | 6,328 | 4,737 |
| Guernsey, &c..... | 3,382 | 4,784 | 9,038 | 2,545 | 1,619 | 2,967 | 1,706 | 2,156 | 1,939 | 3,744 |
| British Colonies (America)..... | 8,272 | 132,907 | 183,681 | 147,631 | 186,787 | 196,876 | 224,649 | 232,329 | 232,869 | 324,739 |
| United States..... | 156,192 | 1,621,796 | 1,032,564 | 1,381,877 | 1,381,877 | 1,982,318 | 2,294,942 | 1,901,986 | 2,399,935 | 2,803,490 |
| West Indies..... | 1,481,373 | 319,329 | 311,546 | 368,261 | 368,261 | 350,595 | 382,260 | 465,900 | 1,489,457 | 522,726 |
| East Indies..... | 226,921 | 362,509 | 530,307 | 491,152 | 587,054 | 587,054 | 543,387 | 446,629 | 351,475 | 668,161 |
| Africa..... | 530,614 | 377,815 | 165,204 | 44,237 | 37,871 | 67,403 | 44,844 | 118,600 | 218,095 | 259,683 |
| Total..... | £5,190,637 | £5,505,034 | £5,510,668 | £3,806,536 | £4,399,920 | £5,172,884 | £6,011,133 | £4,936,355 | £6,499,339 | £6,876,939 |

When we look to the state of trade, at the end of the last century, when we see that by the French revolutionary war the Continental States are become manufacturers, that the United States of America are using every effort to become the same; and that, in the infancy of all manufactures, the lowest description requiring the least capital, and the least skill, must first occupy their attention, it can excite no surprise that the exportation of woollen manufactures should have decreased, and particularly coarse woollens made from English wool. But the Continental States have not confined their manufactures for their own use; they are meeting us in every country of the globe, and as the South American States, and the markets of Hindostan and China are opening to us, they are equally open to them. We must look to those countries for the continued demand for the produce of our flocks, and the employment of our population.

The other point under this head is the importation of Foreign Woollens. This will be divided into two points, viz.—the importation for re-exportation, or what may be more properly termed woollens passing in transit to other countries; and the importation for home consumption.

The warehousing act was passed in 1823, and the transit for Foreign woollens being thereby opened, several merchants purchased small quantities of cloth in Prussia, and warehoused them in London; and some manufacturers of Silesia, and other parts of Germany, made shipments on consignment to this country: the wool tax had been three years in operation. The price of wool in Germany had been reduced considerably by that tax, and the warehousing act could not have been passed at a more favourable moment for this new trade; but so soon as the tax on wool was reduced to 1d. per lb., the Foreign manufacturers thenceforward

ceased to have those advantages, and the trade now can scarcely be said to exist.

The importation of woollens, including the official value of those which were warehoused and re-exported, was, during the tax, and since its repeal, as follows:—

OFFICIAL VALUE.

| 1823. | | | 1824. | | | 1825. | | | 1826. | | |
|---------|----|----|--------|----|----|--------|----|----|--------|----|----|
| £. | s. | d. | £. | s. | d. | £. | s. | d. | £. | s. | d. |
| 26,008 | 3 | 10 | 71,588 | 6 | 3 | 61,232 | 7 | 9 | 41,865 | 6 | 6 |
| * 1,821 | 10 | 0 | 3,146 | 10 | 0 | 5,606 | 15 | 0 | 15,160 | 3 | 11 |
| 24,186 | 13 | 10 | 68,441 | 16 | 3 | 55,625 | 12 | 9 | 26,705 | 2 | 7 |

No Return for 1827.

* Exports.

The other point is the importation for home consumption. There has always been considerable importation of carpets from Turkey; these being included in the returns above, I have deducted the official value of importation from Turkey, which will show the probable amount of transit business, and that for home consumption.

The duty paid on the declared value of woollens imported for home consumption,—

| | | | |
|--|---------|----|----|
| In 1826, was on | £20,501 | 1 | 10 |
| The Official Value of importation from Turkey, in 1826, | 15,160 | 3 | 11 |
| | £5,341 | 17 | 11 |

Makes the apparent importation from all other countries only £5,341 17s. 11d., and as the declared value is greater than the official value, it is evident that, with the exception of Turkey carpets, the importation of Foreign woollens for home consumption has been trifling.

Under this head there does not appear to be any observation in Earl Stanhope's letter requiring notice.

9. The effect of duties in this and in Foreign countries on wool and on woollen manufactures.

This most important point has not, in my opinion, been either sufficiently investigated by the Committee of the House of Lords, nor has the inquiry been directed in such a way as to elicit the bearing and effects of duties on wool, and woollen manufactures. I state this, because I think that duties may be, and have been advantageous to some countries, whilst they are disadvantageous to others; and duties which have been advantageous to a country at one period, become, by change of circumstances, disadvantageous at another.

The effect of a duty on the importation of wool would depend upon the situation of the country so importing it.

If a country produce sufficient wool, and not more than sufficient, to give clothing to its own population, and have no export trade, a tax on the importation of the Foreign material might prevent it from coming into competition with the native material, and keep up the price of wool to the advantage of the grower. That might be the effect, and I shall at present avoid giving an opinion upon the equity or policy of such a measure.

If, however, a country produce more wool than is sufficient to clothe its own population, and depends upon the exportation, either in its raw or in its manufactured state, for consumption, the effect of a tax on the importation of wool might lessen the demand, prevent the con-

sumption of native wool, and reduce its price: and, if foreign be necessary to mix with native wool, for the purpose of making saleable cloth, a tax on foreign must reduce the price of native wool.

This, I conceive, is the present state of this country at present. Mr. Ellman states, that, during the period of the tax, (from 1819 to 1824,) "the South Down wool was all purchased; at that time there was none left in the hands of the farmer."* I conceive that, without taking into account the price stated for South Down wool by manufacturers, but confining the point to the evidence of Mr. Legg, which is also confirmed by Mr. Nottidge, it appears that the price of wool was, according to

| | Mr. Legg's Table.† | | Mr. Nottidge's Table.‡ | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----------|------------------------|---------|
| | | | Spring. | Autumn. |
| In 1818 | 2s. 6d. per lb. | 2s. | 2s. 4d. per lb. | |
| During the tax, in 1819 | 1s. 7d per lb. | 2s. | 1s. 5d. per lb. | |
| Do. in 1820 | 1s. 5d. per lb. | 1s. 5d. | 1s. 4d. per lb. | |
| Do. in 1821 | 1s. 3d. per lb. | 1s. 2½d. | 1s. 2d. per lb. | |
| Do. in 1822 | 1s. 3d. per lb. | 1s. 1d. | 1s. 3d. per lb. | |
| Do. in 1823 | 1s. 3½d. per lb. | 1s. 2½d. | 1s. 3d. per lb. | |

If the wool had been all purchased from the farmers, is it possible that what happens in every other trade should not happen in the wool trade; and, as Mr. Ellman states in evidence, that in proportion to the *reduced* supply and *increased* demand, prices should *fall*? the depreciation could not be so accounted for, but it is explained by the reduced exportation of woollen manufactures.

In the Appendix to the Report, Mr. J. W. Smith made a return to the Committee of the House of Lords, page 455, he makes the

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Foreign wool imported in 1828, | 29,142,290 lbs. |
| English wool exported, in 1828, | 278,552 lbs. |

* Report, page 67. † Report, page 102. ‡ Report, page 277.

making the proportion of Foreign wool imported one hundred and four pounds and a fraction to every one pound of English wool exported.

The obvious conclusion which would be drawn from this return is, that the export is a mere trifle, of no consequence whatever; but if this return had been made, *as it ought to have been made*, it should have embraced all the wool exported, raw, in yarn, and manufactured; that would have shown the real weight of the import and export of wool. I have endeavoured to make such a table, but have found it impossible to bring it to a satisfactory result, so as to give a correct idea. The returns of cloth exported are made by the piece, varying in length from ten to thirty yards: the yards vary in weight from ten ounces to two and a half pounds. I found it impossible to fix an average, but, taking the shortest average length, and the least average weight, the following is the result, so far as I have been able to calculate it;—

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Weight of Woollen Manufactures, and Wool, exported in the year ending 5th January, 1828, | 47,035,071 lbs. |
| Importation of Foreign Wool, | 29,142,290 lbs. |
| Weight of Foreign Woollens im- ported, (value £10,000,)..... | 1,000,000 — 30,142,290 lbs. |
| | 16,892,781 lbs. |
| And, as four-fifths of the Wool imported is for Home consumption, it will amount to | 23,313,832 lbs. |
| Which will make the weight of British Wool ex- ported, | 40,206,613 lbs. |

The British wool grower is therefore dependent upon Foreign orders for the consumption of that quantity of

wool, which is about one quarter of his production ; and, consequently, any check to the exportation of woollens, and wool, must be severely felt by the wool grower. The manufacturer feels it *first* by his reduced orders, but, as his purchases of wool decrease with his orders, the farmer feels it *the most* by the accumulation of his produce.

In proceeding to the other point—the effect of the wool tax on the woollen manufacturer, I must refer to the Parliamentary Documents, and some analyses of them. In the appendix to the Lords' report, page 638, there is an account of the British woollen manufactures exported during the last ten years, distinguishing the periods when the sixpenny duty was existing upon Foreign wool, and when the duty was one penny. It was prepared under the direction of the Committee, by Mr. J. W. Smith. I disclaim all intention of insinuating, or supposing, that this table was prepared to establish any particular point favourable to the opinions of either side. I believe that the period of ten years, (being an even period,) was fixed upon accidentally, and without any idea of its result ; but the table places the point itself in a very erroneous point of view, and it does not elicit the truth.

In the first place—the woollen and worsted goods are both included in the number of pieces exported in each year. The wool tax decreased the exportation of woollen goods, whilst the exportation of worsted goods, not being affected by the tax, increased, and by placing 1818 and 1819, two years preceding the tax, and which was a period before the trade could be affected by it, with the years 1825, 1826, and 1827, which were immediately after the tax was reduced, and when the trade had not recovered the effects of the tax, and, the panic in

1825, the result, though showing a decline during the continuance of the tax, does not give the actual and correct decline to its alarming extent. In order to show the real state of the trade at that period, I have separated the goods exported which were manufactured solely from short clothing wool from the goods made entirely from long wool ; and taking in every instance my calculations from the tables printed by order of the House of Lords, and in the Appendix, pages 628 and 629, except the years 1816 and 1817, of which, as there was no return to the House of Lords, I have adopted the return to the House of Commons, I have taken the four years 1816, 1817, 1818, and 1819, being the four years immediately before the tax was laid ; and the same number of years, 1820, 1821, 1822, and 1823, being the four years in which the tax was in full operation. I have omitted 1824, being the year in which the tax was reduced, and when the trade was unhinged by that change, and have taken the years 1825, 1826, 1827, and 1828, in which the trade was again in its natural state, except that it had not recovered the effect of the tax, and the panic of 1825, which materially reduced every branch of trade in the kingdom.

ANALYSIS OF OFFICIAL TABLES
RELATING TO THE EXPORTATION OF WOOLLEN AND WORSTED MANUFACTURES,
IN FOUR YEARS PRECEDING THE TAX OF SIXPENCE PER POUND ON FOREIGN WOOL—IN FOUR YEARS DURING THE CONTINUANCE OF
THAT TAX—AND IN FOUR YEARS AFTER THE REPEAL OF THAT TAX.

| | 1816 to 1819. | | | | 1820 to 1823. | | | | 1825 to 1828. | | | | |
|---|--|---------|---------|---------|---|---------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 1816 | 1817 | 1818 | 1819 | 1820 | 1821 | 1822 | 1823 | 1825 | 1826 | 1827 | 1828 | Total. |
| Quantities of Cloth, Coatings & Kerseymere, Exported in Four Years— | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cloth, Pieces | 638,368 | 467,221 | 478,878 | 446,872 | 340,044 | 268,598 | 375,153 | 419,748 | 407,454 | 384,598 | 327,968 | 370,850 | 1,490,570 |
| Coatings, Pieces | 88,588 | 90,481 | 93,329 | 78,525 | 60,374 | 59,644 | 69,622 | 67,757 | 51,485 | 45,268 | 41,800 | 51,690 | 193,343 |
| Kerseymere Pieces | 92,691 | 91,182 | 83,493 | 104,468 | 71,643 | 78,944 | 91,402 | 95,870 | 108,012 | 126,439 | 86,038 | 122,048 | 442,537 |
| | Total Pieces..... 2753,596 | | | | Total Pieces..... 2018,429 | | | | Total Pieces 2123,450 | | | | |
| Stuffs, Pieces..... | 593,308 | 565,841 | 683,448 | 937,944 | 717,681 | 838,824 | 1,021,103 | 1,078,424 | 1,242,343 | 1,138,588 | 1,125,077 | 1,233,538 | 4,764,546 |
| | Decrease since the Tax—Pieces..... 735,167 | | | | Increase since the repeal of the Tax—Pieces 105,021 | | | | Total Increase—Pieces 1964,005 | | | | |
| | Increase..... 845,391 | | | | Increase..... 845,391 | | | | | | | | |

The brief result of this analysis is, that in 4 years,
 The woollen trade when taxed *decreased* 735,167 pieces.
 The worsted trade untaxed *increased* ... 845,391 —
 In the 4 years since the reduction of the tax,
 The woollen trade has *increased*..... 105,021 pieces.
 The worsted trade has also *increased* ... 1,118,641 —
 And if the raw material is allowed to come in without tax, the woollen trade will probably increase in the same rate.

The difference betwixt the Table of the House of Lords and the above Table is as follows:—
 Decreased exportation of woollens during the tax according to the Report of the House of Lords 82,841 pieces.
 Actual decreased exportation of woollens in that period 735,167 pieces !!!
 An average annual decrease..... 183,798 pieces !!!

The declared value of exportation of woollens in the same Table is equally fallacious.
 There are two modes of giving the value of trade at the Custom House.
 Official value* is the measure of quantity. Declared value is the measure of amount exported.
 The rate of official value never varies, it is the same that it was in 1696.
 The declared value† fluctuates according to the real value of the article exported, nothing can more clearly elucidate this than the Table of official and declared values of woollens exported, from 1819 to 1828.†

* Mr. Irving's Evidence, page 215. † Lord's Report, page 630.

The following is a statement of three years :—

| | Price of Wool. | Official Value of Exports. | Declared Value of Exports. |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1819-19d. per lb. | £5,097,018 | £6,734,990 | |
| 1824-14d. — | 4,631,765 | 4,861,186 | |
| 1828- 9d. — | 5,024,546 | 4,565,370 | |

By the Table of declared value it would appear that the exportation of woollens had decreased, since the reduction of the wool tax, and so they have in amount, whereas by this very Table it is proved that it has gradually increased in quantity. It is evident therefore from these returns, that the exportation of cloth during the tax as stated in the petition—merchants' petition to Parliament—did decrease one-fourth, that since the tax was repealed, the exportation of cloth has increased. Can any reason be given for this, except the tax on Foreign Wool?

As during the continuance of the tax, the worsted trade, the cotton, the silk, and every other branch increased, and *the woollen trade alone decreased*, must it not be evident, that there was a pressure upon the woollen trade, which did not extend to any other, and no pressure except the wool tax fell peculiarly upon the woollen trade: the effect therefore of the duty in England was injurious to the manufacturer by reducing his exports, to the wool grower by reducing the demand for his wool. The effect of the tax which was imposed in England had a directly opposite effect on foreign manufactures. This has been already stated: the reduced price of wool in Germany and the increase of manufactures to which that gave rise, acted in the inverse ratio, depressing the British and advancing the Foreign manufacturer, and such must ever be the consequence of taxation in every country where an article is dependent upon foreign demand for its con-

sumption. The agriculturists had to thank themselves for the reduced price of wool, from the tax, and a renewal would depress it still more.

10. *The proportion between the home and the foreign markets for woollen manufactures.*

It is difficult to form a correct opinion of the relative extent of the home and foreign trades.

The whole value of the woollen manufacture was estimated by the late Earl of Sheffield, at £28,000,000* annually, and the average annual value of exportation, about that period, was £7,000,000; according to this calculation, the foreign trade was about one quarter of the whole. I am inclined to think that the difference is much greater now than it was at that time; the quantity of wool grown in Great Britain, is, according to evidence, increased at least one-third: the importation of Foreign Wool has increased: and from the increased extent of population, and mills in the manufacturing districts, I think it would not be going beyond the bounds of probability, in estimating the extent of the woollen manufacture, at present, at upwards of thirty-two millions; the annual average exportation of woollen manufacture was, till the last two years, about six millions, and consequently the foreign trade is now about 1-5th of the whole. The question will naturally arise, why has not the foreign trade kept pace with the home trade? The reason will appear in this investigation, the French proverb might with great propriety be applied to it—

“Laissez nous faire.”

* Address of Earl Sheffield, at the Lewes Wool Fair, 1818.

If this maxim had been followed, and the raw material allowed to come in untaxed, the foreign trade in woollens would probably have continued to maintain its high rank.

11. *The change which has taken place in the demand for the finer articles of manufacture.*

That such change has taken place, must be obvious to the most superficial observer, and this may have arisen from two causes, the reduced price of all raw materials, which so far as they go, are in reality an increase of wages, as with the same wages, the lower classes are enabled to buy either a larger quantity or a better quality; or it may arise, from the discernment of all classes, who discover, that the cheapness of an article does not depend upon the lowness of the price alone, but upon the wear and durability of that article, as compared with the price; they find, that for the purpose of clothing, cloth made from fine wool, and well wrought, at a high price, is eventually cheaper to them than cloth made of coarse wool and ill wrought, at a low price; the same principle extends to every other article of manufacture, and the consequence is, that looking to relative prices of fine and coarse raw materials of every description, wool, cotton, silk, and flax, the fall of price has been in the lowest qualities; I will take the two largest articles in proof:—

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|---------|-----------------|
| Finest Electoral Wool in 1817 was | 8s. 6d. per lb. | in 1827 | 5s. 6d. per lb. |
| Spanish Estramadura do. | 4s. 3d. do. | do. | 1s. 3d. do. |
| Cotton Upland | do. 1s. 5d. do. | do. | 0s. 6d. do. |
| Surat | do. 1s. 3d. do. | do. | 0s. 4½d. do. |

It is therefore evident, that the working classes in this country are better clothed than formerly.

Let not the rich be envious of this, but rather rejoice at the increasing comforts of their neighbours. It is seen not only in dress, but in their dwellings, and in the education of their families, and while it is to be hoped this advantage will continue, it becomes necessary to look to other countries not enjoying this prosperity, for the consumption of articles made from coarse raw materials, and every means must be exercised to give the manufacturers the power of competing with foreigners, who have the advantage of low prices of food.

Such is the state of this country and its effects upon the home trade, that the manufacturer must meet the taste, the comforts, and even the luxuries of the times; if he should continue to make coarse cloths, which were the common wear of the country 30 years ago, his goods would be unsaleable; while his more intelligent neighbour, going along with the times, would supply the demands. The manufacturer has no alternative, he cannot lead and command the taste and judgment of his customers, but he must meet their wishes and supply them with the goods they require; hence it is, that coarse raw materials have been neglected, while those which are wrought into the finer fabric have been most called for and commanded a better price. But this is not confined to articles of clothing, it extends to food; the oaten bread is superseded by wheaten bread, and the consumption of tea, sugar, and coffee, has had a similar effect on prices; the better qualities have fallen the least per centage in price. Similar changes have taken place in several states of Europe, and such must be the consequences of such wars as we have witnessed. The Romans in their conquests carried along with them improvements in arts, comforts, and luxuries; the armies of England and France made known to every quarter of the globe the comforts they had left at home.

12. *The past and present value of cloths manufactured solely from British wool, without any mixture of British wool with the fine wools of Germany and Spain, with the low wools of the Mediterranean, Germany, Denmark, Russia and Iceland, and with the wools of Australia.*

I have doubted what was the intention of the Committee of the House of Lords on this head. It might be their Lordships' wish to apply it to the value per yard of the various cloths, or it might be to show the relative amount of cloths manufactured solely from British wool, as compared with those made from mixed wool. In speaking upon the last head, I endeavoured to show the change which has taken place in the demand for finer articles of manufacture, it follows from such change that the coarser articles have been most neglected, the finer articles most in demand. There can be no doubt but the cloth manufactured in this country for exportation was formerly almost altogether made from British wool. The importation of foreign wool, prior to 1800, in no instance amounted to 5,000,000lbs. weight: compare this with the growth of English wool at that period, estimated at 144,000,000lbs. weight, and the relative value of cloth made from foreign and from English wool is evident. But at that period there were articles made from English wool which have now almost ceased to be known: the woollens exported to Holland were kerseys, half thick, and other low goods, very thick and heavy, consuming an immense quantity of wool, and which trade has now ceased to exist, Holland is supplied by the cloths of Prussia, that branch of manufacture was carried on chiefly in the neighbourhood of Halifax, and those manufacturers who were

so employed have turned their mills to cotton manufactures, flannels, baizes, and woollen cloth of finer qualities.

The Italian trade at the same period employed large districts in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield, in the manufacture of coarse narrow plains, called by the Italians caliseri, which are not now known; and that district is a great seat for the manufacture of fine cloths, principally the mixture of English and Foreign wool, and of fancy articles made from the mixture of wool and cotton for waistcoats.

The *past value* of cloth manufactured was almost solely from English wool.

The *present value* cannot well be estimated. In carpets and coarse woollens, the wools of Ireland, South America, Russia, Denmark, and the Mediterranean are used, which enable the manufacturers to make a cheaper article; the wools of Germany and Spain are mixed with British wool to make a finer and better article, more saleable, because more suitable to present taste, than could be produced from British wool alone, and the importation of all is necessary, not only for the continuance of our woollen manufactures, but for the consumption of that English wool, which would not at the present day be used without being mixed with foreign. If the importation be checked or prohibited, as the power of the House of Lords cannot extend across the British channel, the manufactures will be carried on by our opposite neighbours, and England, as well as distant markets, will be supplied from Prussia, Germany and France. The British wool grower will have to depend upon the foreign manufacturer for the sale of his wool.

There are some observations in Earl Stanhope's letter connected with this head of the subject, which

require notice. I fear it may be difficult, if not impossible to make his Lordship understand it; but I trust I may satisfy the public, that what may appear paradoxical is perfectly correct and true. Earl Stanhope somewhat triumphantly says, as if he had discovered a discordance in the evidence:—"Foreign wool is soft, it finishes well, and it handles well, and it mills well, according to the representation of Mr. Sutcliffe; but here again there is an unfortunate discordance in their opinions, for Mr. Ireland states, that the Foreign wool wastes more than the English, and Mr. Francis says the direct contrary, the waste in the Foreign is less than the English."* I cannot discover any discordance betwixt the opinions of Mr. Sutcliffe and that of Mr. Ireland and Mr. Francis, and cannot help thinking his Lordship never could have intended to connect them together; but there does appear some discordance betwixt the opinions of Mr. Ireland and Mr. Francis, and this arises from the Foreign wool which each uses, and with the nature of which he is best acquainted. Mr. Ireland states in his evidence, that he uses *German wool*, which he says, "is not scoured so well as the English wool." Mr. Francis speaks of no Foreign wool except *SPANISH*, and he says, the waste in Foreign is less than in English, the English wool wastes 5lb. in the score, the other wool 2lb., he does not mention German wool in any part of his evidence.

The next sentence in Earl Stanhope's letter can be equally well explained: it is,—“There is another strange difference in the statements of the witnesses, who appeared on the behalf of the manufacturers, for while Mr. Gott says, that Foreign wool makes *finer*,

* Lord Stanhope's Letter, page 15.

“and therefore a more valuable cloth, Mr. Cook says in the *very low description* of goods we use Foreign wool entirely.”

Mr. Gott speaks of cloth, and both from the evidence produced and from the knowledge of persons, whether engaged in the woollen trade or not, it must be evident, that the Foreign wools make finer cloth than English wool. Mr. Cook is a manufacturer “of blankets, low cloths, drugget cloths, and cloths of that description.” These are his own words—he says again, he “uses Russia wool, low German wool, and some from Turkey, Italy, Iceland, and the Levant;” he again says, “he buys some Foreign wool at 2½d. per lb. (Lord Stanhope quotes that price) and the highest price we pay at present for any wool we import is 7½d. per lb.; that the average price of what we purchase is 5½d. per lb.”

From their own evidence therefore the point must be perfectly clear.

Mr. Gott buys foreign wool suitable to his manufactures, and thereby makes cloth fit for the nobility and higher classes, or mixed with English wool suitable for Foreign markets.

Mr. Cook buys foreign wool suitable to his orders, and, whether manufactured by itself, or mixed with English, makes articles, which by their low price are suitable for Foreign orders, and for Negro clothing.

Each must study the taste and wishes of his customers, and though it may appear strange, it is nevertheless true, that taste equally governs the purchases of the lower, as the higher classes in society, and these tastes must be attended to, or articles would be made which could not be sold; and unless Mr. Gott were to import Foreign wools, though they might inter-

ferre with South Down wool produced in England, and Mr. Cook were to import coarse Foreign wool, though they might interfere with Scotch wool they would be obliged to abandon the manufacture altogether, and as it is quite true, that the use of Foreign wool is necessary to make cloth suitable for Foreign and home markets, so it follows, that the more Foreign wool is imported, the greater will probably be the consumption of English wool.

13. *The value made wholly from foreign wool.*

The weight of wool imported in the year ending January 5, 1828, was 23,340,785lb. paying 1d. duty and consequently exceeding 1s. per lb. in value; it is probable, that half that quantity would be mixed with English wool, leaving the other half, and of the finest quality to be manufactured into cloth, without any admixture; estimating that wool at 3s. per lb., and that it is doubled in value by manufacture, it would make the value of cloth made wholly from Foreign wool, at £3,500,000, the great bulk of which is consumed in the home trade.

14. *The effect of the manufacture of articles made of Cotton, and of Wool mixed with Cotton, upon the Wool Market, and upon the Woollen Trade.*

The cotton manufacture in Great Britain has increased most rapidly, and given employment, support, and comfort to our immense population; the importation of cotton wool shows its increase and extent. In

the year, 1783, the whole cotton trade was estimated at £960,000,* and though the father of the cotton trade, Arkwright, (for to him and to Watt this country is indebted for its prosperity, from those wonderful inventions which enabled it to meet the difficulties she had to contend with from the high price of food, and to retain that trade, which, without their machinery, must have gone to States where food was cheap), invented his carding engine in 1775, he had made so little progress, that in 1782, he petitioned parliament for a renewal of his patent, so as to make up for the great losses and expense he had incurred; and yet so rapid has been its progress, that the weight of cotton wool imported in 1827 was 249,822,683 pounds,† whilst before the French Revolution, 1787, the weight imported was only 16,031,938 pounds. The amount of cotton manufactures annually exported exceeds £30,000,000, nearly the amount of the whole of the woollen trade. The general use of cotton manufactures shows to what extent it is now used in the home trade.

I do not mean to say, that the introduction of cotton has injured the woollen manufacture; but if the woollen manufacture has been injured at all by the importation of any raw material, it is by cotton; the importation of wool has in every instance either improved the fabrics, which we formerly made from British wool, or enabled the manufacturers to produce a cheaper article.

Cotton is in some cases mixed with wool in manufactures of baize, flannel, and waistcoating; not having

* Macpherson, Vol. 4, p. 16.; but this amount could not be correct.

† Return to House of Commons, printed 13th May, 1828. No. 322.

the felting property, it can only be introduced into the goods of thin fabric, which do not require much fulling or milling, and cannot, therefore, become general.

The low price of cotton, the neatness and durability of goods manufactured from it, may have reduced the demand for low wools, and if any is affected by it, British wool will feel it soonest; common observation will discover, that velveteens, fustians, and heavy cotton goods are much worn now by the lower classes, and particularly by agricultural labourers, taking the place of cloth, whilst the thinner articles are used by women, instead of worsted goods, this change must have produced some effect; but it would be most unwise and most unjust to attempt to check the manufacturer on that account, nor would any restriction to importation which could be adopted in this country succeed; it would compel the cotton manufacturer to leave our shores, and carry on his trade in other countries. We come again to the same point; more wool is grown in Great Britain than Great Britain consumes, or can consume; we must look to Foreign demand for its consumption, and this can be attained by no other means than by relieving the woollen trade from burthens and restrictions. It cannot be produced by laying restrictions and burthens on the other branches of the national industry.

15. *The importation of Woollen Rags, and the uses to which they are applied.*

The use of rags in the woollen manufacture commenced about sixteen years ago, when the price of wool was very high; it has grown up to a trade of some im-

portance, and in its various processes gives employment to the very lowest classes; the collection of linen rags is necessary for the paper trade, and woollen rags are collected at the same time; they are sent into Yorkshire, where women are employed to sort them; the seams of old clothes are cut off, and with such parts as cannot be used in manufactures, are sent to the hop plantations in Kent, Sussex, &c. whilst those parts capable of being re-manufactured, are torn into pieces by machinery, and reduced again into a sort of wool. It appears from the evidence of Mr. Nussey, that the quantity of rags so used amounts to about 9000 packs, of which one-eighth are imported: they enable the manufacturer to give a cheap article, and give great and general employment, not only in the manufacturing districts, but throughout the country to poor people in the collection.

16. *The probable increase of Wool from Australia.*

When we look to the immense production of wool among the Germans, supplying their own manufactures, as well as those of England, France, and America, and find that the growth of fine wool in the north of Europe, can only be traced to the year 1786, when a few Spanish sheep were allowed to escape out of that kingdom; and when on the other side, we look to the immense extent of the Australian colonies, and their peculiar fitness both in soil and climate, for the production of wool of the finest quality, it is impossible to form an idea of the probable supply from that part of the globe; the progress which has already been made is great. It appears that a few Spanish sheep, not exceeding twelve in number, were pur-

chased at the Cape of Good Hope, in 1795, and carried to Port Jackson, by Captain Waterhouse, of his Majesty's ship, *Reliance*.* These sheep fell into the hands of most intelligent and respectable individuals, Mr. M'Arthur, and the Reverend Mr. Marsden, and the great and unwearied attention which has been given to this subject by Mr. M'Arthur, who purchased some of the flock of his late Majesty, in 1804,† whilst it has been highly advantageous to his own family, has been of essential; of vital importance to the country he adopted, exciting the attention of other settlers to this department of agriculture. The progress made in New South Wales in the improvement of fine wool has been rapid, and some now imported is equal to the wool of any country, and of any times: it has the strength of wool, with the softness of silk, and its milling and felting properties are great. It is a remarkable fact also, that each year the fleece of the individual sheep improves. The following certificate will prove this circumstance; it may be expected at no very distant period, that the wools of Australia and Van Dieman's Land, will take the place of German wool, in the same manner in which we have seen German take the place of Spanish, and Spanish of English fine wool.

"We, the undersigned Wool Brokers of London, have particularly examined, at the request of Mr. Henry Hughes, two Ewe fleeces said to be respectively of the clip of 1826 and 1827, from the flock of Mr. Richard Jones, of Sydney, N. S. W. marked, Δ weighing 23 oz. each, and we declare, that in our deliberate opinion the former is a fleece of considerable fineness; but that the fleece of 1827, represented by Mr. Jones, to be from the same Ewe, as that

* Kent's Letter to Baron Field.

† Vide page 57.

of 1826, has improved in a very extraordinary manner, and is in our opinion, the finest fleece of wool we have ever seen.

(Signed)

C. & J. D. JACOMB.
W. & J. M. DUNN.
THOS. ELSWORTH.
W. H. LORD.
JOHN GAISFORD.
EVANS & REES."

"London, 4th September, 1826."

The island of Van Dieman's Land was first a settlement in 1802. The Englishman* who first set foot in that beautiful and rich colony is still living. It is some years behind its older neighbour; but from the experience already gathered, wool of equal quality may be produced, and the increased and increasing attention which is given to that subject is every day showing its beneficial effects, and the wool of Van Dieman's Land will very shortly be equally fine.

It may be thought that the great distance from Europe will check the supplies of so bulky an article as wool; but the wools of Saxony, Silesia, Hungary, and Bohemia, come to this country through long inland and expensive navigation, running through different states some of which exact transit duties; while the wool of Australia is brought by maritime navigation, and the expense is not greater than the carriage from the states of Germany.

But while the disadvantages under which these colonies appear to labour from their great distance from Europe, are thus counterbalanced, let those interested in them bear *it constantly in mind*, that the fear and jealousy of the landed interest of Great Britain is not confined to foreigners, it extends to their fellow subjects in every

* Alexander Riley, Esq.

clime, whose production can, as they think, interfere with the productions of Great Britain. The tax imposed on the importation of wool in 1819, was extended to that imported *from British possessions*, it was enacted, that a duty of three-pence per lb. be laid on wool from British possessions, on the 5th January, 1823, and sixpence per lb. on the 5th January, 1826; the first duty of 3d. per lb. did actually take place, it was almost fatal to the production of those infant colonies

Lord Stanhope says "With respect to the wools of our own colonies, it, would be better even that a bounty be granted, than any duty should be imposed on their importation."

"*Timeo Danaos, et Dona ferentes.*"—Virgil.

Having now made some observations upon each of the heads into which the Committee of the House of Lords have divided this subject, I will mention a few which have not been so particularly pointed out, but which bear materially upon the present question.

First, as to the *importation of foreign wool*.

The importation of foreign wool may be traced back to a very early period of our history. It is first mentioned in the reign of Henry II. as already stated. In the reign of Charles I., 1634, a proclamation was issued, prohibiting the exportation of any white cloth, coloured cloth, cloths dressed and dyed out of the whites,* *Spanish cloth*. This expression could only mean cloth made from Spanish wool, and is a proof of its importation

* *Fœdera* Vol. XIX. p. 583.—*Macpherson* Vol. II. p. 381.

at that time, and the importation must have increased considerably; for in the year 1651, a project was laid before the English Commonwealth, for obtaining of the court of Spain the pre-emption of all Spanish wool: the projectors observed, that this proposed pre-emption "would totally dissolve the woollen manufacture of Holland, which by reason of this wool hath of late mightily increased, to the destruction of the vent of all finer cloths of English manufacture, in Holland, France, and the East country."* It was not till the reign of George II. that the quantity of Spanish wool imported was ascertained, and that only for one month. "In the month of May, 1730, 1144 bags Spanish wool were imported into the port of London." †

We have returns of the quantity of foreign wool imported since the year 1784. ‡

This shows the large increase of the manufacture from foreign wool, and gives some idea of the population employed in it; of the means which, by the importation of this raw material, are given for the purchase of corn, meat, and other productions of the land, the monopoly of which is granted to the landed interest, and yet that very interest would throw that population out of employment.

Another point which has not been considered by the Committee of the House of Lords, and which naturally arises from the last observation, is the effect of the Corn Laws on the woollen trade. They operate two ways—by reducing the rate of wages in the manufacturing districts on the continent, and by making it unprofitable to the foreign farmer to sow corn, by which

* *Thurloe* Vol. I. p. 201.—*Macpherson* Vol. II. p. 444.

† *Macpherson* Vol. III. p. 158.

‡ *Vide* page 73.

he is compelled to increase the quantity of his sheep, and to pay his chief attention to wool. In point of weight, the exportation of wool from Great Britain in its manufactured and raw state is about double the weight of the wool imported: if, therefore, any legislative enactment, whether it have the effect of advancing the price of food, or advancing the price of raw materials here, or, which is the same, reducing the price of food, and of the raw material, to foreigners, prevents the exportation of woollen manufactures, that law must reduce the price of English wool. The opinion of the manufacturers on this point was ascertained in the spring of 1825.

Mr. Huskisson was the means of ascertaining the above point, when President of the Board of Trade; his search for information, his attention to the real interests of commerce, and his firmness in persevering in his measures, under every difficulty, arising from prejudice and self-interest, have made him justly esteemed the best commercial statesman which this country has ever known. [I trust this feeble expression from so humble an individual will be excused by that Right Honourable Gentleman.] It would require powers and a mind great as his own, to speak of all the advantages his measures have preserved and given to the manufactures and commerce of his country.

Mr. Huskisson did me the honour to send for me in Feb. 1825, and informed me of the plan he then had in contemplation, for the introduction of foreign woollens for home consumption, and desired me to ascertain the opinion of practical men engaged in the woollen trade. In order to show most clearly his object and intention, I insert the following Letters:—

No. I.

Basinghall-Street, February, 1825.

SIR,

ANXIOUS to give you correct information respecting the proposed duty on Woollen Manufactures, in order to protect the British Manufacturer, but not to prevent the importation, I have consulted two of my neighbours, Mr. Sheppard, and Mr. Bond, (the partner of Mr. Maitland); we are of opinion, that, under the present circumstances of this country, with taxes on raw materials and dyeing wares, and the still more heavy virtual taxation, from Corn Laws, it would be dangerous to allow the importation of any Foreign Woollens at a protecting duty less than from 25 to 30 per cent. We form this opinion, not from feeling the least objection to the change of policy now contemplated, but with the full conviction, that these measures, followed up with as much liberality as would be just to our own manufacturers, will most essentially contribute to the prosperity, not only of Commerce, but of the British Manufactures; and, without any fear of meeting foreign competition, if placed on an equal footing. In order to show that this is not a hasty conclusion and that the rate of duty is not fixed too high, it may be desirable to state the grounds of the calculation. The coarsest cloth which has been imported into this country, under the Warehousing Act, has been sold, dyed blue, (with Indigo) at 1s. 10d. to 2s. 6d. per yard. It is manufactured in Poland (principally by Jews), where food is very cheap, and wool extremely low, and is sold white, in the state in which it comes from the fulling mill, at the fairs of Francfort-sur-Oder and Leipsig; it is dyed and finished there and in Silesia, and is again sold at succeeding fairs, and finds its way to every market in Europe. These qualities have an advantage in this market, of about 15 per cent. Their weight, as compared with their value, is disadvantageous to them.

Cloth, from 3s. to 8s. per yard, is manufactured principally in Silesia; our wool tax, at even 1d. per lb., is a great protection to the Manufacturers of Silesia; their machinery is upon improved principles—the King of Prussia gives every possible encouragement, by high rewards and patents, and by sending intelligent mechanics to every part of Europe, to see other manufactures, their cloth of these qualities is at least 25 per cent cheaper than English, and has driven the British cloth from the markets of Europe, Turkey, Egypt, and Persia, and has made great inroads in China, and every effort is now used to supply the South American markets, direct from Hamburgh. Cloth above 8s. per yard is also made in Silesia, but the principal

competition is felt from Prussia, Flanders, Verviers, Aix la Chapelle and the borders of the Rhine. It is less formidable than the competition in coarser cloth, but as the great market for finer fabrics is our home trade, great alarm would be excited in the manufacturing districts.

I hope, I may be permitted to remark, that if, under existing circumstances, this protection is necessary in the British Market, it must be evident, that the distant markets are those to which we can alone sell English woollens, and these are preserved to us by our superior navigation, our enterprize, and capital, which advantages must gradually decrease, as the manufactures and capital of Prussia and other Continental States increase, and therefore the repeal of taxes on raw materials and dyeing wares, together with the gradual, but total repeal of the Corn Laws, must be looked to as the only means of preserving to this country, the most important branches of our national industry.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your obedient humble Servant,

JAMES BISCHOFF.

To the Right Honourable William Huskisson,
President of the Board of Trade, &c. &c.

No. II.

CIRCULAR TO THE MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS.

London, 24th Feb. 1825.

DEAR SIR,

I received a note from Mr. Huskisson, desiring I would call upon him at the Board of Trade. Mr. Pearse was kind enough to accompany me. Mr. Huskisson informed us that it was in contemplation by his Majesty's Government to make considerable alterations in the Duties on the Importation of several Articles, and instead of fixing such a high Duty for Home Consumption, which is in reality a prohibition, to adopt such a scale as will be sufficient protection to the Manufacturers of this Country, but will open the Home Market in some degree to foreigners: Mr. Huskisson stated some important reasons for these alterations, viz. to prevent measures now in contemplation by some of the Continental States, grounded upon the restrictive and prohibitory policy, which has heretofore governed the Commerce of Great Britain, and to set a liberal example to other Countries.

Having stated so much, he then asked what Duty would in my opinion be sufficient protection to the Woollen Manufacture in its several branches. Although the sound and liberal principles of the measures now in contemplation must be admitted, I declined to give an answer upon a question of so much importance, involving the interests of so immense a population, and requested permission to consult you and other Manufacturers; observing however, that if the Duties on Rape Seed, Olive Oil, Dyeing Wares, and all Articles used in Manufactures were repealed, and the Manufacturers were placed on the same footing with foreigners, in the price of food, particularly of Corn, they would have no fear of foreign competition either at home or abroad, but so long as the price of bread in Prussia is three-pence or four-pence, and in England eleven-pence and one shilling, a heavy protecting Duty must be required on all Woollen Articles, sufficient to cover the taxes falling peculiarly on the trade, and the increased cost of labour, which forms so great a component part of them, and I gave my opinion that the coarser fabrics would be most endangered, because, under the warehousing system the sales of foreign Cloth under five shillings per yard, compared with Cloth above five shillings per yard, bear the proportion of more than one hundred to one. Mr. Huskisson admitted this argument to its fullest extent, and is anxious to obtain the sentiments of a few respectable intelligent men in every branch of the Manufacture, so that such duties may be fixed as will be a sufficient protection but not a prohibition; I shall therefore be obliged to you for your opinion, and what duty you think sufficient protection to your branch of Manufacture, that it may be communicated to Mr. Huskisson. Mr. Huskisson expressed his desire that the intentions of Government may not be made public, as they may excite unnecessary alarm: the measures are under consideration and not determined upon.

I am, &c. &c.

Your obedient Servant,

JAMES BISCHOFF.

The Answers which were received to that Circular, and which corroborated the opinion given in my Letter to Mr. Huskisson, were transmitted; this Circular was sent to the Manufacturing Districts; and the Answers corroborating the opinion given in London, were transmitted to

Mr. Huskisson; that Right Hon. Gentleman desired me to wait upon him again, and the result of that interview was transmitted to the same Districts, by the following Circular:—

No. III.

London, March 8, 1825.

MY DEAR SIR,

I yesterday received another note from Mr. Huskisson, desiring me to call upon him. He expressed his wish to relieve the Woollen Trade as much as could be done consistent with the Public Revenue, from taxes on raw material, dyeing wares, &c. &c. and desired me to send him a list of articles falling under that description. I shall, therefore, be obliged to you to state what articles are used by you. Having given this advantage to the manufactures, and surrounded as the Corn Question is with difficulties, he should then consider what duty on the importation of Woollens would be sufficient to counterbalance the effects of the Corn Laws and to give to the British Manufacturer protection in the home market. I shall be obliged to you, therefore, to give me your reply to the questions at foot.

I remain, &c. &c.

Your obedient Servant,

JAMES BISCHOFF.

These Answers were sent to Mr. Huskisson, with the following letter, which embraces the questions proposed:—

No. IV.

Basinghall-Street 15th March, 1828.

SIR,

I have the honour to transmit to you letters, which I have received from Mr. Sheppard; Uley; Mr. Gott, Leeds; Mr. Radcliffe, Saddleworth; Mr. Fawcett, Bradford, Yorkshire; Mr. Worthington, Leicester; and Mr. Gandy, Kendal; in answer to the two enquiries,—

1. What articles, used in their manufactures, are subject to duty on importation, or are raised in price by export duty, or restriction?

2. What per Centage will be considered sufficient protecting duty against the importation of foreign woollens, for Home Con-

sumption, in case those duties and restrictions should be removed, with the exception of the Corn Laws, and the proportionate expense incurred on the growth of Teazles and other products of the soil which are used in the Woollen Manufacture?

I also send, at your desire, a general list of articles used in the woollen manufacture, the price of which is advanced, either by direct taxes or by restriction, and having consulted Mr. Thomas Sheppard, Mr. Bond, Mr. Webb, Mr. Maclean, and Mr. Hughes, who are extensively interested in the woollen trade, I am desired to state, that whilst they are fully alive to the great advantages the foreign trade in English woollens will derive by the proposed repeal of duties, and concur in approving the liberal, and what they conceive, wise measures, now in contemplation, and if placed upon the same footing as foreigners in the price of food, they would have no fear of meeting their manufactures without duty; they will require a high protecting duty on the importation, so long as the present Corn Laws continue, and in case of alteration in these laws, will require a protecting duty equivalent to the protection, which may at any time be given to the Landed Interest in the price of corn, and they conceive, that 20 per Cent. *ad valorem*, is the lowest rate, that, under the present circumstances, can be fixed, after the repeal of taxes and removal of restrictions, with exception of the Corn Laws.

I am also desired to say, that in a matter of such vital importance to the Woollen Trade, the Gentlemen I have mentioned wish their opinion to be considered as that of individuals.

If there is any other information which you think I can give, I shall be happy to wait upon you, whenever you may appoint, and remain with great respect,

Sir,

Your obedient humble Servant,

JAMES BISCHOFF.

To the Right Honourable William Huskisson,
President of the Board of Trade, &c. &c.

It then appeared that the Corn Laws operated as a pressure of 15 or 20 per centum on the woollen trade, and if it required a protecting duty of 15 per cent. here, it follows that the woollen manufacturer had a disadvantage of 15 per cent. in foreign countries open to other manu-

facturers. In strict right, therefore, the British woollen manufacturer ought to have received a bounty or drawback, equivalent to the increased price of labour, caused by the Corn Laws; for whether it be paid by direct taxation, or indirect taxation, is immaterial. Earl Stanhope talks of a protecting duty of 15 per cent. on woollens imported into this country, and infers from it, that the landed interest ought to have the same duty on wool; this duty of 15 per cent. is not a protecting duty, on account of direct taxation, for the revenue of the State, but a protection against what the landed interest have obtained, and what they call a protection for themselves: it is solely a protection against protection; the Corn Laws are intended to be advantageous to the landed interest.—they MAY keep up the price of corn in England, but they DO keep down the price of corn abroad: the one effect—the advantage to the land owners is problematical, the other—the disadvantage to the manufacturers is certain. The repeal of the Corn Laws, by throwing a capital into the trade, would advance the price abroad, would increase the cost of labour, would remove those advantages which foreign manufacturers enjoy, but, whether the price of English corn would permanently fall or not, is doubtful. The repeal would, no doubt, cause some decline at first, but it might not continue: it might, and probably would, equalize prices, it might make England a great depot of corn, from whence all quarters of the globe, wherever scarcity prevailed, might be supplied, and the carrying trade attached to such supply would be given to British shipping. Earl Stanhope is pleased to say—“You who are the wool growers suffer in common with the corn growers, with the ship owners, and with many other classes of so-

ciety, from new and pernicious systems which have been adopted.” Of all systems which have been adopted, the system of the Corn Laws is most injurious to the British ship owner: the pressure of these laws on the woollen trade is defined—it is 15 per cent. and the woollen manufacturer has to contend against it; if an additional tax be imposed on wool, it would put a stop to his trade; it would make his attempt at competition fruitless. The Corn Laws have an equal effect on the price of the ship, and on the rate of the seamen’s wages, but they have put a total stop to one important branch of the carrying trade; like a tax on a raw material they annihilate his trade, and an union between the landed and the shipping interest would be an anomaly at variance with reason and common sense.

Another point not reported upon by the Committee of the House of Lords is, *the exportation of British wool and yarn*, and this omission is the more remarkable, because it is the only one in which a legislative measure has followed. Since this investigation, the duty on the exportation of wool and yarn has been reduced from one penny per lb. on fine wool, a halfpenny per lb. on coarse wool, to one shilling per cwt; this will so far relieve the wool grower, as it will facilitate the demand for his produce; but relief should not be confined to the export of wool, it should be extended also to the importation of wool, and to every article bearing upon the manufacture. The English manufacturer must be enabled to meet the foreigner or the wool, if not exported unmanufactured, must accumulate in the hands of the grower: while, therefore, the tax on exportation of wool is reduced to a mere nominal rate, and is more a measure of quantity than a measure of

finance, let the tax on the importation of wool, and on the exportation of manufactured woollens, be repealed. The latter may appear small—1 per cent. *ad valorem*, but it must be remembered that 1 per cent on value is, in reality, a tax on the profit made by the manufacturers, and if that be 5 per cent, the tax is in fact 20 per cent. on his profit.

Another measure which would be of great advantage to the increased demand for woollens, would be a further reduction in the tax on olive oil and dyeing wares. I cannot, upon this subject state a greater authority than Mr. Huskisson; the few words which he spoke upon that subject embrace the whole question.

“During the exigences of the late war, duties were laid or increased upon various articles used in dyeing. The revenue derived from these duties is not considerable, but in proportion to the amount of the charge must be the increased price of the manufactured commodity. Be that charge upon our woollen cloths for instance, 1 or 2 per cent., even this small addition, in the present open competition of the foreign market, may turn the scale against us, and ought, therefore, to be withdrawn.”*

Another point not reported upon by the Committee, is duty on wool imported, and drawback on woollens exported. The inference which would be drawn from this omission is, that the Committee were convinced of its total impracticability, and would not have been noticed if Earl Stanhope had not brought it forward in his letter. If his lordship could discover, from any of

* Speech delivered in the House of Commons, 25th March, 1825, on the Foreign Commerce of the Country, by the Right Honourable William Huskisson, p. 59.

the witnesses examined, or from any man in the kingdom, how a merchant could be induced to import an article of the value of two-pence halfpenny, upon which he has to pay a duty of sixpence, and still sell the article for twopence halfpenny, I should say the thing is practicable. The importer of the wool could not, by any contrivance, get back in drawback the duty he pays. The wool, when imported, must be sold in the same market as British wool; they are blended and mixed together, so that it would be utterly impossible to trace the foreign wool in the numerous articles of which it forms a component part: so that if the drawback should be confined to foreign wool, the proper result could not be obtained. I believe there is only one way in which a tax and drawback can be brought to bear, and that is, a tax on the weight of all wool imported, and the same bounty on the weight of all woollens exported; the Chancellor of the Exchequer might have some little objection to it, the exportation of woollens being double the weight of the importation of wool, but the following will show that Right Honourable Gentlemen how that plan would operate:—

Wool imported 29,142,290 lbs. would bring to the public purse £726,157.

Woollens exported, double, would take from the public purse £1,452,314.

CONCLUSION.

Having now endeavoured, I fear very imperfectly, to give some explanation of the various heads to which the Committee of the House of Lords have directed the attention of that branch of the legislature, I think

it will be evident to an impartial and discerning public, that the measure intended by the landed interest—a *tax upon the importation of foreign wool*—can in no respect be advantageous to the owners and occupiers of sheep-farms: the accumulation of their wool, and the reduced prices consequent on accumulation, have arisen partly from deterioration of English wool, partly from a change of taste in this and other countries, partly from the competition of foreign manufacturers, enabled in time of peace to seek out every market both at home or abroad, and partly by the effect of the Corn Laws on the rate of wages in this country; all these combining to one point have produced the effect felt by the wool grower and lamented by the manufacturers, and the best, if not the only way to encourage the manufacture and improve the price of British wool, is to remove every tax and restriction which falls upon the woollen trade.

PUBLISHED BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

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1819.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE REPORT OF THE EARL OF
SHEFFIELD TO THE LEWES WOOL FAIR—*July*
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