Nothing more fully demonstrates the folly of attempting to encourage manufactures by prohibiting importation than the history of the silk trade. The greatest importation of raw and thrown silk which took place in any one year, pre­viously to the repeal of the prohibitory system, was in 1833, when the quantity imported was 2,432,286 lbs. ; while, by the foregoing table, it appears that 5,320,965 lbs. were im­ported in 1837, at the same time that the official value of our silk manufactures exported during the same period, was L. 140,520 during 1823, and L.503,673 during 1837 ; of which, the proportion exported to France was L.43,l44.

Those who are best qualified to form an opinion, consider the duty of 30 per cent. on the importation of silk goods still too high, and that the duty should be reduced to 15 or 10 per cent.

In no country has the silk manufacture made more rapid advances of late years than in Prussia. In 1831, the num­ber of looms was 8,956 ; in 1834, they had increased to 12,044 ; and in 1837, to 14,111.

The following table shows the excess of exports from Prussia over the amount of the imports :—

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Silk Goods.** | | | **Mixed Silk Goods.** | | |
| **Imports.** | **Exports.** | **Excess of Exports.** | **Imports.** | **Exports.** | **Excess of Exports.** |
|  | **lbs.** | lbs. | **lbs.** | **lbs.** | **lb·.** | **lbs.** |
| 1834 | 254,985 | 559,079 | 304,094 | 106,950 | 320,266 | 213,316 |
| 1835 | 201,981 | 762,004 | 560,023 | 106,596 | 371,971 | 265,375 |
| 1836 | 225,581 | 847,826 | 622.245 | 121,236 | 404,435 | 283,199 |

The duty on the importation of silk goods into Prussia, is 110 dollars per centner, or 2s. 9d. per lb., which is almost five per cent. on the value of the goods. The import duty on mixed silk goods is 55 dollars per centner, which is equal to 1s. 41/2d. per lb., or almost nine per cent. *ad valorem.*

Silk *Manufacture.* The processes of silk manufacture fall under two great divisions. The one, comprehending all those operations undergone by the silk in its preparation for textile or other purposes ; and the other, those by which the prepared silk is formed into the various beautiful crea­tions of the loom. The operations comprehended in the first division being for the most part peculiar to this manu­facture, are those which will here occupy our attention ; while those of the second division, being common to the va­rious textile substances, will be found described under the general head Weaving.

In other textile substances, the manufacturer operates up­on bundles of short fibres, which, by drawing out and twist­ing together, he forms into continuous threads ; but in the case of silk, a very different treatment is for the most part required. Here the silk-worm is the spinner, and art is called in, not to join short filaments, but so to strengthen the delicate threads of the worm by combination, as to fit them to endure the manipulations to which they are after­wards subjected. We have said for the most part, for this reason, that, from the manner in which the worm labours, there arises a necessity for two modes of operating, one of the nature already described, the other analogous to that of the cotton-spinner ; and that the reader may be prepared to understand the reason for this, and many other peculiari­ties arising from the same cause, we shall here present him with a sketch of the manner in which the worm produces the material to be operated upon ; and this sketch needs to be but brief, as in the article Silk-Worm, immediately se­quent, the fullest information will be found. When the silk-worm has arrived at that stage of its existence at which it begins to spin, it ceases to feed, grows restless, and moves about, seeking a place wherein to commence its labours. When it has found a comer or hollow fit for its purpose, it attaches long threads from side to side, to form supports for its work ; these it does not dispose in any regular manner,

but crosses and recrosses them in such a way, as to make its work as strong as the situation will admit of. In ply­ing its labours, the little creature by degrees narrows their sphere, and when it has enclosed a space of about the size of a pigeon’s egg, its work assumes a more regular charac­ter, and shortly presents the appearance of a loose silken ball of an oval shape, with the worm labouring inside of it. In a little while, the increasing compactness of the ball renders the labours of the worm no longer evident to the eye, and that it continues to work can only be known by the noise within. When all sound has ceased, the forma­tion of silk has also ceased. Although from the compact­ness of the ball, the worm labours unseen, we can yet tell by after dissection, and by the unwinding of the thread, that it does not lay its thread regularly round the inside of the ball, but to and fro from one spot to another, for many times, gradually shifting its position, until it has gone over the whole surface, and so gradually, that a great many yards of thread may be unwound without once turning the ball. The substance of which the thread of the silk-worm is com­posed, is secreted by the animal in the form of a fine yel­low transparent gum, and exuded by two minute orifices be­neath its jaw ; hence the thread is a twin one, formed of two threads proceeding from these orifices, cemented to­gether by a gummy substance, similar to that of which they are formed ; and when the worm has finished its labour of spinning, it smears over the whole interior surface of its work with the same gum, doubtless for the purpose of pro­tecting it in its chrysalis state from rain. If we examine the finished work of the worm, we shall find it to consist first of those filaments used as supports, and next of a ball of a loose texture and irregular construction, serving as an envelope for another ball, compact in its nature, and regu­lar in its formation, within which the worm lies enshrouded. This compact ball is called a *cocoon,* and its soft envelope *floss silk.* The thread of the coc∞n, from the regularity of its deposition, can be unwound to the end, and the ope­rations to which it is subjected are those of doubling, twist­ing, twining, and their accessories, classed under the name of silk throwing. The floss silk, with the additions after­wards to be noticed, is not unwound, but, under the name of waste has its filaments hackled, combed, and reduced to short lengths, and then carded and spun in a manner ana­logous to those of cotton.

When the spinning of the cocoons is accomplished, a se­lection of those that are to be kept for breeding is made, and the remainder are assorted according to their qualities. These are generally reckoned nine, and are as follows :

1st, Good cocoons ; these are strong, firm, and nearly equally round at both ends, not very large, but free from spots.

2d, Calcined cocoons, in which the worm has died, and been reduced to powder by a disease which sometimes at­tacks them after having completed their work.

3d, Cocalons, larger and less compact than the good co­coons.

4th, Choquettes, cocoons in which the worm had died be­fore it had finished spinning ; the silk is fine, but apt to furze in winding.

5th, Dupion, or double cocoons, containing two or more larvæ; these are difficult to unwind, and are often kept for seed.

6th, Soufflon, cocoons of so loose and soft a texture, as to be almost transparent ; these cannot be unwound.

7th, Pointed cocoons. In these one end rises in a point, which breaks off after a little silk has been unwound, and so spoils the thread.

8th, Perforated cocoons, from which the moth has made its way out.

9th, Bad choquettes, in which the silk is spotted, rotten, and blackish in colour.

The first operation to be performed, preparatory to the unwinding of the silk from the cocoon, is to destroy the vi-