Thus, then, the result of our wool trade may be stated in round numbers as follows.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Lbs.** |
| Grown in the British isles 125,000,000  Imported@@1 50,000,000 | |
| Together 175,000,000  Exported 10,000,000 | |
| Manufactured 165,000,000 | |

We conclude this part of our article with a statement of the prices of foreign and British wools at the end of June 1841.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Per Lb.** |
| German, duty paid:  Saxon 1st and 2d Elect 3 0 a 5 0  Silesian, Secunda 1 9 a 2 3  Austrian, 1 Elect 2 9 a 3 6  Bohemian, Prima 2 0 a 2 6  Hungarian, Secunda 1 4 a 1 10  Lamb 2 0 a 3 6  Pieces 1 6 a 2 6  Fribs 1 0 a 1 6  Spanish and Portuguese :  Leonesa 2 0 a 2 2  Segovia 1 9 a 2 0  Caçeres 1 6 a 1 8  Estremadura  Portugal 1 3 a 1 6  Lambs’ 1 6 a 2 0  Goats’ 0 9 a 1 2  Australian, 1st quality 1 10 a 2 4  Ditto, 2d quality 1 4 a 1 8  Ditto, 3d quality 1 2 a 1 4  Ditto, Lambs’ 1 6 a 2 6  Ditto, Grease 0 9 a 1 0  Van Diemen’s Land, 1st quality 1 9 a 2 3  Ditto, 2d quality 1 5 a 1 9  Ditto, 3d quality 1 1 a 1 5  Ditto, Lambs’ 1 6 a 2 4  Ditto, Grease  0 9 a 1 0  Cape, 1st quality 1 6 a 1 9  Ditto, 2d quality 1 1 a 1 6  Ditto, 3d quality and grease 0 8 a 1 0  British fleeces 1 1 a 1 5  North and South Down hoggets  half bred ditto  ditto, ewes, clothing 0 10 a 0 10½  Kent fleeces 1 2 a 1 3  combing skins 0 10½ a 1 2  ditto flannel wools 0 11 a l 3  ditto blanket wools 0 7 a 0 10  Leicester fleeces 0 10 a 0 11  In yolk, Devons 0 7 a 0 9  Ditto, Downs  Ditto, Merino  Goats’ wool, Turkey  Yam, mohair | |

The above prices are those of the qualities ordinarily to be found in the market. Occasionally some exceedingly fine samples are to be met with ; they are called “ fancy samples,” and of course fetch fancy prices. We have now before us a sample of beautiful Saxon clothing wool of this kind, for which 7s. 6d. was paid by an extensive manufac­turer of Leeds at a time that “ Saxon first electoral was quoted at perhaps 5s. 6d.” Such fancy wools being neces­

sarily very limited in quantity, and being always readily bought, do not fluctuate much in price.

The origin of the manufacture of woollens is beyond the reach of tradition ; but the keeping of sheep was among the prominent occupations of the oldest nations or tribes of which we have any record. It has been supposed that sheep and goats were originally kept for their milk, and the use of their skins for clothing could not fail to suggest itself to the rudest people. Indeed, among all savage tribes, even at the present day, we find the skins of beasts com­monly employed for the above purpose ; and among those barbarous nations a little advanced in intelligence, textile fabrics of various materials, and displaying more or less of ingenuity, are manufactured. The arts of spinning and weaving were known to and practised by the Egyptians ; but the peculiarity of the woollen manufacture consists in the advantage which is therein taken of the felting pro­perty of wool. Pliny tells us that the art of fulling cloth was discovered by Nicias of Megara ; but as Megara was founded only about 400 years before the building of Rome, or 1131 years before the Christian era, there is every reason to believe that the art was practised in the east long before his time.

Indeed the accidental matting of wool upon the sheep’s back would naturally suggest the felting process. “ Whilst the skins of sheep,” observes Mr Luccock in his Treatise on Wool, “ dressed with the wool on, served as clothing, it is obvious that only one useful fleece could be obtained from one animal ; and as the fleece is generally cast or falls off once a year, this produce must have been wasted. In a very early period, however, the property which wool pos­sesses of felting was discovered ; or, in other words, it was found, that by pressure and moisture, the fibres of wool might be made to adhere together, and produce a compact pliable substance, quite as durable and more convenient than the skins formerly used. This appears to me to be the first effort to produce a woollen manufacture.’’

The art of spinning and weaving wool was known in the time of Moses, who wrote in 1450 b. c., or 320 years before the foundation of Megara ; and as common use and ex­posure to weather would, to a certain extent, *full* an old garment, the fulling of cloth could not long remain un­known.

There is reason to believe that among the Romans the woollen manufacture had attained considerable perfection. We find among the Roman writers many passages drawing the distinction between the *piled* or *napped* fabrics and those which were simply woven, the threads being left ex­posed. The former were called *pexœ,* and the latter *tritce ;* and we may almost fancy that we discover in the distinc­tion the difference between a fine cloth tunic and a com­mon stuff garment.

From the very complete manner in which the Romans established themselves in Britain—resembling more our modem colonies, which have been described as “ complete in all their parts,” than our early American colonies, which were mere masses of labourers—we may infer that the wool­len manufacture was introduced by them. Indeed Camden says they had a cloth manufactory at Winchester.

From the time of the Romans until the conquest we have no record of the manufacture of woollens ; and even then the notices scattered among the writings of historians are exceedingly scanty. This however is certain, that among the Saxons, and indeed for many centuries after the conquest, the costume of the peasantry was of leather ; and there is reason to believe that the “ buff jerkin” re­tained its place as the ordinary dress of the labouring people of England until the time of the commonwealth.

It is generally supposed that the woollen manufacture

@@@r Average of the last *four* years, 51,841,246.